No. 63 NOV. 22, 1913 5 CENTS

Nick Carter Stories

STREET & SMITH
PUBLISHERS
NEW YORK

~ THE LAST CALL ~
OR,
NICK CARTER'S ~ ~ ~
PATCH-WORK PROBLEM

NICK CARTER STORIES

Issued Weekly. Entered as Second-class Matter at the New York Post Office, by STREET & SMITH, 79-89 *Seventh Ave., New York.*

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No. 63. NEW YORK, November 22, 1913. **Price Five Cents.**

THE LAST CALL;

Or, NICK CARTER'S PATCH-WORK PROBLEM.

Edited by CHICKERING CARTER.

CHAPTER I.

HIS LIFE IN PERIL.

Nick Carter did not often wear a frown in the morning.

It was somewhat surprising to Chick Carter and Patsy Garvan, his two chief assistants, therefore, when they entered his study after having missed him at breakfast, which the servant informed them he had had an hour earlier—it was somewhat surprising to them when they found him with a very threatening frown on his strong, clean-cut face.

Chick had observed a similar expression at times for several days, but he had refrained from asking any questions. He knew that Nick would volunteer any disclosures that he wished to make. The expression was so pronounced that morning, however, that Chick exclaimed impulsively:

"Come, come, out with it! What have you on your mind, Nick? What have you had on your mind for several days? Don't dodge the question. I know there is something. Out with it!"

"So I say, chief," put in Patsy. "You've been mulling over something for nearly a week. It's something that bothers you. Give us a chance to share it with you. What's doing?"

Nick turned around in his swivel chair and smiled significantly. On the open roll-top desk at which he was seated were numerous fragments of paper, most of them somewhat soiled, also a blank pad and a pot of paste. He had removed his coat and rolled up his sleeves, and he already had pasted on the pad most of the fragments of paper, carefully uniting their torn and irregular edges.

"What's that?" Chick added, pausing near the desk. "A jig-saw puzzle?"

Nick did not answer the question. Instead, he said inquiringly:

"Something on my mind, eh? What put that idea into your heads?"

"Your looks," said Chick tersely. "Your face is not quite that of a sphinx, Nick, though I'll admit it sometimes is very hard to read. You have been thinking deeply about something of late."

"Well, I confess that I have, Chick, since you draw me up to the ringbolt," Nick admitted.

"What's it about?"

"A rascal who is out to kill me."

"Kill you!" Chick exclaimed surprisedly. "What do you mean?"

"Precisely what I said."

"That some one is out to kill you?"

"Undoubtedly," Nick nodded, smiling. "But that is not unusual. I suppose there are a hundred crooks in New York City who would, if a favorable opportunity presented itself, knife me in the back, or plug me with a bullet from some dark corner. I have not been fretting over that, however, for I am used to it. I have been merely trying to frame up a scheme by which to get the rascal before he gets me. For he certainly is a persistent dog."

"Great Scott!" Patsy ejaculated. "Have you been up against it in that way, chief, without confiding in us?"

"There was nothing to be gained by telling you about it," Nick replied. "That would have served only to cause you anxiety."

"Explain," said Chick gravely. "You looked unusually serious when we entered."

"That was about another matter," Nick rejoined, glancing at the scraps of paper on his desk. "Sit down, both of you, and I will tell you what I have on my mind."

Chick and Patsy hastened to obey, drawing chairs nearer to that of the famous detective, while Nick briefly pushed aside the paste pot he had been using.

"To begin with," said he, "you remember the threatening letter I received a month ago from Nate Herrick, the auto bandit whom we captured a few weeks ago and who escaped from the Bridgeport jail."

"Escaped—I should say so!" Chick exclaimed disgustedly. "That was the limit—after the hard work we had in running down him and his gang. All of our labor wasted, in so far as he is concerned, Nick, as well as that infernally crafty jade who figured with him in the Bridgeport case and in his earlier attempt to down Cyrus Langham and wreck the Federal Railway Corporation."

"Nell Garside," put in Patsy tersely.

"There is nothing in crying over spilled milk," Nick replied. "It was not our fault that they escaped. We did our work and did it well, Chick, when we ran down Herrick and his gang of auto bandits and turned them over to the Bridgeport authorities."

"Who ought to have held onto the rascals," Chick declared, with a growl.

"I admit that," Nick agreed. "But there are, you know, weak spots in every jail and in every prison. They are not suspected by the prison builders, who construct to the best of their ability, nor seen by supervisors, wardens, or subordinate officials, who are absorbed in manifold duties. They are discovered, ferreted out, so to speak, by the prisoners themselves, clever convicts who crave liberty and who have nothing else to do in their confinement except to devote their mental and physical energies to finding a loophole for escape."

"That's very true, Nick."

"Nate Herrick found one in the Bridgeport jail," Nick proceeded. "He not only escaped, but he also contrived to liberate his chief confederate, Nell Garside. They were the two worst members of a decidedly desperate gang, and neither has since been located. Nevertheless, as I have said, there is nothing in crying over spilled milk."

"True again," said Chick.

"We shall land both of them, Chick, sooner or later. I now feel very sure that Nate Herrick is here in New York."

"And Nell Garside?"

"Probably. They can accomplish so much more when running double, Chick, that they most likely are in company."

"But why do you feel so sure that they are in New York?"

"Because of the threatening letter Nate Herrick sent me two days after he escaped, in which he declared that he would kill me on sight, and because of some very recent indications that he is trying to make good."

"Kill you?"

"Yes."

"Trying in what way?" Chick questioned.

Nick laughed a bit grimly.

"Any old way that may be safely tried," he replied. "Nate Herrick is not a stickler for ways and means. He killed Jim Vincent from behind a vine-grown trellis, you remember, and shot down Langham's chauffeur in the dark and without a word of warning. The rascal has treated me with a little more consideration. He has, at least, warned me."

"And already has attempted to kill you?"

"Several times."

"The dickens! Why have you not mentioned it?"

"For the reason stated," said Nick. "Why annoy you with it? I'll get the rascal sooner or later, take my word for it, though he has given me three very close calls. That is to say, I suspect that the attempts were made by Herrick, or by some one in his employ."

"You did not see him?"

"No."

"When did they occur?"

"The first occurred last Tuesday. I was about a block below here, on my way home, when a missile whizzed by me and went flat against the brick wall of a house I was passing. It was a bullet and I evidently was the mark for which it was intended."

"Did you hear the report?"

"No. I could tell from which direction the bullet came, however. It was fired from a vacant house on the opposite side of the avenue. I hurried on, pretending to attach no serious importance to the incident, but I afterward stole back and tried to discover the scoundrel."

"In vain?"

"Entirely. If he was in the vacant house, lying in wait to drop me, he had also provided for a quick get-away. I could find no trace of him."

"When was the attempt repeated?"

"Two days later, Chick, and in a different way."

"How was that?"

"I was alighting from an uptown surface car, when the driver of a fast automobile, one of the racing type, shot sharply across the tracks in my direction. He missed me by an eyebrow. It would have been all over but the shouting, if I had not happened to tread on the foot of a passenger who was standing on the platform. I turned to apologize, instead of alighting as quickly as usual. The motor car shot over the very ground upon which I ordinarily would have stepped."

"Did you see the drive's face?"

"Only for an instant. I sprang back involuntarily, and in another second the motor car flew by me and went at top speed through a side street. It was driven by an expert, all right, but I did not recognize him."

"An expert, eh? Then, indeed, he may have been Herrick. He is a dare-devil driver."

"More likely, Chick, it was some one in Herrick's employ," Nick replied. "He would not take the chance of a slip and of being arrested. He is wanted for two murders, you know, and would surely be identified."

"That's true," said Chick. "It would, indeed, be taking a long chance."

"These circumstances lead me to suspect, moreover, that he has gathered another gang around him and may plan a big job of some kind. They may want me down and out before undertaking it."

"You spoke of a third attempt," said Chick.

"Yes, two days ago," Nick replied, "I was walking near a staging in front of a new office building that is being erected in Broad Street. A heavy piece of timber, such as is used for blocking, was dropped from the third floor and struck the pavements directly in front of me."

"By Jove, these cannot be attributed to chance," Chick gravely declared. "They were the dastardly doings of a cowardly cur."

"Gee!" Patsy exclaimed. "Cur is right."

"Though startled, I instantly looked up, lest more might follow," Nick proceeded. "I was just in time to catch sight of a face disappearing over the edge of the staging."

"One you recognized?"

"No. I saw it distinctly, nevertheless, and I know that the man was not Nate Herrick. Knowing that a workman would not have dropped such a piece of timber, however, I rushed into the building and tried to find the miscreant. As before, my search proved futile. The rascal had bolted after stealthily attempting to kill me."

"Could you identify him?" Chick inquired.

"Positively."

"You may see him again, then, and——"

"I already have seen him again," Nick interrupted.

"When?"

"Early last evening."

"You did not arrest him."

"No."

"Nor question him?"

"I did not."

"Explain."

"I'll tell you why," said Nick. "He was coming out of Martin Grady's saloon, in Second Avenue. He was reading a letter, or a short communication of some kind, and he did not see me. His face indicated that the missive was of serious importance, so I stepped into a doorway and continued to watch him

"He stood on the curbing for several moments, evidently committing the writing to memory, which convinced me that he did not want it to fall into other hands. He tore the sheet of paper into small fragments, which he scattered in the gutter, then hurried away."

"Ah, I see," said Chick, glancing at Nick's desk. "You collected the fragments."

"I did," said Nick. "It had to be done immediately, moreover, or the wind would have blown them away. That's one reason why I let the man go. I judged that the missive might reveal something of more serious significance, moreover, than I could learn from the man himself. I could have detained him on suspicion, only, being unable to prove that he attempted to kill me, or even that he was really the man who threw the timber from the staging. I decided to secure the scraps of paper, therefore, and let him go temporarily, thinking I could find out who he was from some one in Grady's saloon, where I suspected he had called for the letter."

"Did you succeed?" Chick asked.

"Only in collecting the fragments of the letter," Nick replied. "Grady's bartender, who readily recalled the man from my description, stated that he was a stranger in the place, and that he had merely entered to buy a drink. I think that the bartender gave it to me straight. The stranger, nevertheless, evidently had received the letter only a short time before. It may have been handed to him in the street."

"Wouldn't it have been better, then, to have held him until you could learn what the letter states?" Patsy inquired.

"No, or I should have done so," said Nick. "The man had not seen me. He hurried away, and I collected the fragments of paper without being observed. If my suspicions are correct, if he is in Nate Herrick's employ, the latter's confederate in a plot to kill me, or if he should prove to be a member of a new gang organized by Herrick, it would be to my advantage to hide the discovery I had made and keep the rascals in the dark. That's why I let the man go."

"I see," said Patsy.

"It was, indeed, the wise course," Chick also agreed. "I see you have pasted most of the fragments together."

"Yes." Nick turned to his desk. "Luckily the letter was written on only one side of the paper."

"You have read, of course, that portion already pasted together," said Chick. "What do you make of it?"

"Draw up," Nick replied, reaching for his paste brush. "It will take only a few moments to add the remaining pieces. I then will read it complete."

"Gee!" murmured Patsy, gazing over Nick's shoulder. "It looks like a patch-work problem, all right."

CHAPTER II.

THE PATCH-WORK PROBLEM.

Nick Carter very soon matched the torn edges of the few remaining fragments of paper, pasting them on the pad with the others, and he then had before him the entire letter he had taken such pains to secure, and which he shrewdly had suspected contained something of even greater importance than the immediate arrest of its recipient, despite his murderous designs.

As Chick had inferred, Nick already had read a portion of the letter, which had given rise to the frown noticed by his two assistants. For the communication was a significant one, though it consisted of only a few lines written with a pen on ordinary blank paper, and having neither date, address, or signature.

It read as follows:

"Mauler due at nine to-morrow night. Get next. Both to the hawk's nest. Air line. Covert way. Quit sesame and use barley. Her ladyship now wears three rings on one hand and two on the other. This from the gadfly."

Nick read aloud this patch-work problem, as Patsy had aptly termed it, while his hearers settled back in their chairs and gazed at him perplexedly.

"What lobscouse is that?" said Chick. "I can make nothing of such a rigmarole."

"It's blind enough, for fair," supplemented Patsy.

"Not blind to the man I saw reading it," replied Nick. "He knew what it meant, every word of it."

"Each sentence, then, must have some secret significance."

"Certainly. Furthermore, we must dig out the secret."

"If possible."

"We must make it possible," Nick insisted. "There is no telling how much may depend upon our learning what this means, and to what it leads."

"How long have you been at work on it?"

"Since daylight."

"Three hours, then, at least," said Chick, again bending over to read the cryptic communication. "Have you met with any success?"

"Some."

"Good!"

"And then some," Nick tritely added, smiling.

"That sounds better still," laughed Chick. "If you continue, Nick, you may reach the superlative degree."

"I am never content with less. The best is none too good for me."

"But what do you make of the letter? Can you interpret any part of it?"

"I think so. I am, in fact, quite sure of it."

"Tell us."

"Go ahead, chief," pleaded Patsy. "Cut loose and put us wise."

Nick again took up the pad and glanced at the repaired letter.

"I have subjected this to a very vigorous analysis while at work pasting the fragments in proper juxtaposition," said he. "It baffled me for some time. Not until I detected the meaning of one of the middle sentences, in fact, did I begin to see the significance of the others and the probable meaning of the entire communication. My interpretation may be wrong, of course, but I'm inclined to think I am right."

"Begin with the first sentence," Chick suggested. "What do you make of it?"

"Mauler due at nine to-morrow night," said Nick, reading it aloud. "Mauler might, of course, refer to some kind of a hammer, a battering-ram, or the like, assuming that the word comes from maul, meaning to pound, mash, or break. It might be the name of a boat, or a vessel, on the other hand, due to arrive at the time stated.

"It might have other consistent meanings, no doubt, which do not immediately occur to me, for I have decided that it refers to a person, probably to a man, whose name either is Mauler, or who bears it as a somewhat significant nickname."

"He may be a scrapper, a pugilist, or a professional bouncer," suggested Patsy.

"He might, then, indeed, be called a mauler," said Nick.

"What led you to decide that it referred to a person?" Chick inquired.

"The following sentence—get next," Nick proceeded to explain. "Get next is, in my opinion, a terse form for directing the recipient of this letter to meet Mauler when he arrives."

"By Jove, Nick, that certainly appears reasonable," Chick agreed.

"We most naturally must assume, then, that he is to meet a person, rather than a boat, vessel, or anything else to which the word mauler can be consistently applied."

"Certainly."

"This is further confirmed by the next sentence—both to the hawk's nest—which indicates that both Mauler and the man who meets him are to proceed to some place known as the hawk's nest."

"Sure thing, chief," Patsy now declared. "That's the most reasonable interpretation, and for that very reason it is most likely the correct one."

"I think so, Patsy."

"Let's assume that Mauler is a man, then, and that he is to be met by the one you saw reading the letter," said Chick. "Call that man Jim, Nick, for want of his true name."

"Very well," Nick assented. "Jim he is."

"The question then arises—when and where does, or did, the meeting occur?"

"The precise time is easily determined."

"How so?"

"I am sure that Jim, when I saw him reading it, had just received this letter. He committed it to memory and then destroyed it, or thought he did, presumably that it should not fall into other hands and expose something, or somebody. He may have feared that it would be found on his person, perhaps, in case he should be arrested, and the precaution he took was one which crooks very frequently take."

"Gee! that's another point, chief," put in Patsy. "It indicates that Jim, so called, is a crook."

"Quite plainly, Patsy, in view of the other circumstances."

"There must be a crooked game on, then."

"I am convinced of that, also," said Nick confidently. "To continue, the letter states that Mauler is due at nine to-morrow night. That must be nine this evening, then, the letter having been received yesterday."

"Certainly," said Chick. "They are to meet at nine this evening—but where?"

"Either in the Grand Central Station, the Pennsylvania Station, or one of the New Jersey railway terminals, for Mauler is to arrive by train."

"Why by train? How do you hit upon that?"

"Because the time is so precisely stated," Nick explained. "Only the arrival time of trains, ferries, and local conveyances can be so definitely predicted. Mauler is not coming on any local conveyance, however, but from a distance. He is, in fact, a stranger in New York. That is one reason why Jim is directed to meet him."

"By Jove, that also appears very reasonable," said Chick, with some enthusiasm. "Jim evidently is to meet Mauler, then, and to conduct him to a place termed the hawk's nest."

"Exactly."

"What do you make of that term?"

"Hawk's nest?"

"Yes."

Nick smiled a bit oddly.

"It's not so very blind, Chick," he replied. "It is, in fact, quite suggestive. A hawk is a predatory bird, a veritable thief who preys upon others. A crook, though not a bird, also is predatory."

"Gee! some of them are birds," Patsy slipped in dryly.

"In my opinion, then," Nick added, "the hawk's nest is some place in which a gang of crooks is sheltered, or engaged in criminal work of some kind. I think Jim evidently is one of the gang. Mauler may have been brought here from some other section of the country to join it."

"H'm, I see!" and Chick nodded thoughtfully. "That also appears very reasonable. You are doing some fine figuring, Nick. How do you interpret the next two words?"

"Air line?" read Nick inquiringly.

"Yes."

"I think it means that the two men are directed to go to the hawk's nest by the most direct course from the railway station," said Nick. "That's the significance of air line. In other words, Chick, they are to lose no time. The design of the writer was, perhaps, to reduce the risk of their being seen."

"Possibly. Take the next sentence—covert way. How do you interpret that?"

"The definition of covert, Chick, is hidden, private or secret," Nick went on. "Obviously, then, they are directed to enter the hawk's nest by some secret way. That interpretation is confirmed, Chick, by the next sentence, which first started me along this line of reasoning and led to the conclusions at which I have arrived. The sentence reads—quit sesame and use barley."

"Which signifies, in your opinion?"

"Sesame is a kind of grain," Nick pointed out. "You have not forgotten the story of the forty thieves, and how

Ali Baba obtained entrance to the robbers' cave by using the magic password, or command—'Open Sesame'!"

"No, no, certainly not," cried Chick. "I see the point, Nick."

"Gee! who couldn't see it, now," put in Patsy. "You think admission to the hawk's nest, chief, is obtained by means of a password—barley?"

"Exactly," said Nick, nodding. "Obviously, the gang has been using the other word, sesame. Now, for some reason, they have changed it to barley."

"Another kind of grain," said Patsy. "You certainly have hit the nail on the head. By gracious, chief, my money goes on that."

"I think you could safely place a little on it," Nick replied, smiling.

"But what about the following line?" questioned Chick, bending forward to read it. "Her ladyship now wears three rings on one hand and two on the other. Her ladyship is significant. Mauler may be a woman, after all."

"I don't think so," said Nick.

"What is your opinion?"

"I think the entire letter consists of instructions sent to Jim in regard to meeting Mauler at the railway station and conducting him as quickly as possible to the hawk's nest. Otherwise each sentence would not be susceptible to so consistent an interpretation along that line."

"I admit that, of course."

"That being the case, Chick, the two men having been directed to hasten there and enter stealthily by means of a secret password, the most reasonable supposition is that the rings mentioned are signals to be used at the door, if the entrance is through a door, thus informing the persons within that the visitors are their confederates, not strangers, nor the police."

"Three rings and then two, you mean?"

"Exactly."

"By Jove, I guess you are right."

"I feel sure of it, Chick, because it dovetails so consistently with all that precedes it," said Nick.

"I agree with you."

"Evidently, then, the hawk's nest is the headquarters of a gang of crooks, which can be entered only by persons having the door signal and the password," Nick continued. "Both recently have been changed for some reason, and Jim is told in this letter what he now must use. It may be that the rascals have become suspicious of me, and feel that I have in some way got a line on them, and for that reason have changed their signals."

"Why do you think they suspect you?"

"Because of the several recent attempts to kill me," Nick pointed out. "They want me out of the way, as I have stated, before undertaking to pull off a job of some kind. That appears still more probable, Chick, because I twice have thwarted Nathan Herrick and put him and his gang to the bad."

"Do you think he is one of the gang?"

"I know that he is."

"Why so?"

"Because he was the writer of this letter, or the one who dictated it."

"From what do you deduce that fact, if it is a fact?"

"From the last sentence—this from the gadfly," said Nick, reading it aloud. "Note the crafty caution of the rascal, further denoting that he is engaged in framing up a big game. His name is Nathan, you know, though he is familiarly called Nate, and sometimes Nat. Here's the point, then: A gadfly and a gnat are very closely related. Instead of signing his name to the letter, therefore, he merely says, this from the gadfly, or gnat—meaning, of course, Nat."

"Oh, by Jove, that does settle it, for fair," Chick forcibly declared. "Your analysis of the letter is thoroughly convincing. Nate Herrick surely was the sender and probably is the chief of the gang. You have solved the problem, Nick, all right. You certainly have a long head."

"Long head!" echoed Patsy, quite gleefully. "Gee! I should say so. No four-footed beast has anything on the chief, Chick, in length of head and what there is in it."

Though somewhat averse to praise from his assistants, Nick Carter smiled indulgently and replaced the letter on his desk. His interpretation of it was a masterly one, indeed, and evinced his keen insight, his analytical ability and rare deductive art. It was not the work of the few minutes during which he had been talking with his assistants. He had, on the contrary, been applying himself most assiduously for several hours, literally digging out the obscure significance of the letter, the hidden meaning of which would have baffled all but one man in a million.

"That's all very well," said he, replying to both. "Having solved the problem, however, we now must contrive to take advantage of it, which is still more important."

"That's true," Chick said, more gravely. "If your deductions are correct, there certainly is a big game on, with Nate Herrick directing it, assisted by thugs bent upon killing you and removing the most serious menace to their designs and their subsequent safety. The question is, Nick, how are we to make use of these discoveries?"

"That's the important point," said Patsy. "We don't know who Mauler is, nor where he is coming from, for all he is due at nine this evening. If we knew, chief, we could shadow the rascals. That would simplify matters."

"That is precisely what we must do, or one of us, at least," said Nick.

"But how can we get next?"

"We may safely assume, I think, that Mauler is coming from some distant point, and that he is coming by rail."

"Certainly," said Chick. "You've made that plain."

"Undoubtedly, then, he is now on his way and traveling by an express train."

"Probably, of course."

"Give me the Pathfinder, Patsy," said Nick. "We'll find out what express trains from each direction arrive in New York, or on the Jersey side, at precisely nine o'clock. There probably are no more than two or three that arrive at exactly nine."

"Ah!" Chick exclaimed. "I see the point. You may find out at which station the meeting is to occur."

"I think so," said Nick. "It is safe to assume that Herrick states in this letter the exact train time."

"Gee! that's a cinch," declared Patsy, placing the railway guide on Nick's desk.

It took the latter about half an hour to examine the schedules of the several railways. He found that there was a Western express by the way of Albany, due in the Grand Central Station at nine o'clock, also one from Boston. A Philadelphia express arrived at the same time in the Pennsylvania Station, and one via the West Shore in the Weehawken Depot completed the list.

"There are four, then, instead of three," said Nick.

"Luckily, however, two of them arrive in the Grand Central, and that ground can be covered by one of us. I will assign that to you, Chick, while I tackle the Pennsylvania Station, and Patsy the Weehawken Depot."

"Good enough," said Chick.

"That suits me," said Patsy.

"Now," Nick proceeded, "I will describe the man who received this letter and who is to meet Mauler. I think you can easily identify him. He is of medium height and quite stocky build, weighing about one hundred and seventy pounds. He wore, yesterday, a dark-plaid suit and a soft black hat. He is about thirty years old, smooth shaved, with dark hair, a receding forehead, a beaky nose, and pointed chin. I sized him up quite carefully while he was reading the letter."

"That description will answer," said Chick. "I shall know him on sight."

"Me, too," asserted Patsy.

"So far, then, so good," said Nick. "We now will set to work with the telephones."

"What's your scheme?"

"We'll question the police headquarters of each of the large cities from which these trains come," Nick explained. "We can find out whether a crook named Mauler is known in any of them, and, if so, his record and a description of him."

"By Jove, that's a good scheme, also."

"We have the entire day," Nick added. "I think the time will not be wasted."

His prediction soon was verified. Just before noon information was obtained from the Chicago chief of detectives, with whom Nick did the talking, that a man named Thomas Magee, known as Mauler Magee, dwelt in that city and once had worked for a large safe manufacturing company, in which vocation he had acquired a knowledge of locks and safe construction, which he since was suspected of turning to criminal uses, though he never had been detected, or even been arrested for complicity in any burglary.

Later in the day, after the Chicago chief had made inquiries concerning the man, Nick was further informed that Magee had received his nickname, the Mauler, from a gang of cracksmen with whom he was known to have been friendly, and because of his skill in opening a safe. Nick also was told that Magee had disappeared from his customary haunts about a week before, and that his whereabouts could not be learned.

"It would have taken him only a day to reach New York, if he came direct," said Nick, when discussing the matter with Chick and Patsy at dinner that evening. "It is impossible to say which route he has taken, therefore, and we will stick to our plans and try at each station to pick up the couple when they meet."

"That's the proper move," Chick agreed. "Mauler Magee is our man, all right, and he is coming here to join Herrick's gang."

"Gee! that's dead open and shut," declared Patsy. "There's a big burglary on, chief, as sure as death and taxes."

"It's up to us to prevent it, then, if possible, or, if not, to get the gang and their plunder after the deed is done," replied Nick forcibly. "We are crossing the line a little to the windward of the rascals, at least, and it will be our own fault if we let them beat us out."

"Beat us out be hanged," cried Patsy. "The race is as good as won."

"Not until the finish gun sounds, Patsy. The slip of a wet sheet, or a loose halliard, has lost many a race," said Nick pointedly. "Let's make sure there shall be no slip."

CHAPTER III.

BIRDS OF PREY.

Nick Carter was making the most of the evidence that had come so strangely into his possession. To arrest Mauler Magee and his companion, if that should prove to be possible, would be an ineffective move, in that he had no positive evidence against either of the men.

To shadow them, discover the headquarters termed the hawk's nest, and also obtain more definite information concerning the gang and their designs—these steps appeared much more promising, and Nick so directed his two assistants.

His own work that evening, as well as that of Patsy Garvan, proved to be entirely futile.

Nine o'clock found Chick Carter, however, very carefully disguised, engaged in watching two men who met and shook hands cordially near one of the gates through which a stream of people was emerging from the New York Central train due at nine o'clock. The train had arrived five minutes late, and Chick already had discovered and sized up the man whom Nick had described.

The other, whose description had been supplied by the Chicago chief, undoubtedly was Mauler Magee. He was a compact, muscular man of forty, with close-cut red hair, a pug nose and a bulldog jaw and chin. A pair of sharp, gray eyes gave him a decidedly sinister and crafty expression. He was neatly clad and carried a leather suit case.

Chick had edged near enough among the throng of people to see both men distinctly, and as they passed him when leaving the station, he heard Magee say familiarly:

"I'm glad you met me, Plugger. I wouldn't have known which way to head."

"The gadfly got your letter," was the reply. "He tipped me to the time, Mauler."

"I reckoned he would. How is the work going?"

"Fine."

The voice of the man called Plugger, though lowered a little, was imbued with vicious enthusiasm. It was reflected in his face and in the gleam of his narrow eyes.

"Good! I'm glad to hear that."

"It looks like finding money, Mauler, and barrels of it. You'll soon see—this way to the hawk's nest. We'd better walk."

Chick heard no more. He could not, in order to do so, risk being observed by either man. He followed them out of the station, mingling with the throng of pedestrians in Forty-second Street, where his quarry immediately turned in the direction of Broadway.

"Plugger, eh?" thought Chick, while he easily shadowed them. "That's a familiar sobriquet, though I never have happened to see the bearer. There's a gunman up Harlem way named Pete Finley, however, who is known both as Plugger Finley and Pete, the Plugger. Unless I am much mistaken, by Jove, that fixes this fellow's identity. Plugger Finley and Mauler Magee. Very suggestive of two bad eggs. Out after barrels of money, eh? Looks like finding it, eh? That smacks of a big job, all right, and

one easily pulled off—unless some prying meddler butts in and prevents it. That now appears highly probable."

Plugger Finley, whom Chick had correctly identified, shaped a somewhat devious course. It brought him finally into a congested quarter west of Broadway. It was one of the many sections in which the angle formed by the famous thoroughfare and the crosstown streets precludes anything like uniformity in the buildings, and where in this particular case several fine stone edifices facing Broadway were backed by a motley aggregation of much older and smaller buildings, occupied by inferior stores and shops, small business establishments of diverse kinds, and a number of tenement houses, barrooms, and questionable dives.

There are countless similar sections in New York, where it is but a step from opulence to penury, where mansions stand cheek by jowl with huts and hovels. For above this motley collection of buildings, overlooked with a sort of scornful grandeur by its plate-glass back windows, rose the massive walls of the recently finished quarters of the Federal Railway Corporation and its branch banking establishment, the Federal Trust.

Instead of proceeding up Broadway, Plugger Finley took a roundabout course to his destination. He paused for a moment in front of a low brick building, then shrouded in darkness, and pointed to the window of a small shop on the ground floor, that of a cabinetmaker, where a display of his handiwork could be dimly seen through the gloom within.

Chick Carter, then on the opposite side of the street saw Finley's gesture, and observed that he said something to his companion. Glancing at a sign over the door, Chick read the name of the cabinetmaker, Joseph Clark, and also saw that the other two floors of the low building evidently served him for a workshop and for storage purposes.

Chick then attached no special significance to the incident, however, for the two men moved on, passing another shop, then closed for the night, and arrived at the entrance to a narrow court adjoining the quarters of a local express company.

Finley paused for an instant and glanced sharply around. Then, grasping Magee's arm, he drew him into the court, where both men quickly disappeared in the darkness.

"Covert way," Chick muttered, recalling the instructions in Herrick's letter. "He referred to a secret entrance, all right, just as Nick suspected. I must keep an eye on the scamps, by Jove, lest they give me the slip."

Darting across the street, he peered cautiously into the court.

Finley and Magee had disappeared, but their receding steps could be faintly heard.

Chick slipped around the corner and stealthily followed the couple.

Ten seconds later, out of a doorway directly opposite the court, a man leisurely emerged and sauntered back of a passing wagon, crossing the street and taking a position on the curbing, with his gaze fixed furtively on the court and with his right hand thrust—into his hip pocket.

Though he no longer could see his quarry, Chick still could faintly hear their footsteps. He continued to follow them, crouching in the darkness. He passed a side door of the express company and presently arrived at a rear corner of the building.

Back of it was a narrow space flanked by a board fence. Beyond the latter rose the walls of the buildings fronting on Broadway. They looked grim and gloomy in the faint starlight, amid the solitude and stillness of this closed-in area.

Peering around the corner, Chick again could see the two men. They were pausing near an angle of the fence some thirty feet away, from which Finley had removed two boards, forming an opening through which both of them presently passed.

Finley turned back and replaced the boards, then disappeared from view of the detective.

Chick waited a few seconds, then crept on as far as the fence, in which he found a knothole through which he cautiously gazed.

The two crooks then were about ten feet away, standing near a back door of the building occupied by the cabinetmaker. Magee had placed his suit case on the ground. Finley had just removed his hand from the wall near the door casing.

"That will bring some one," he said quietly, though Chick heard him distinctly.

"A signal ring?" questioned Magee.

"That's what. Three prods, then two."

"You seem to be well guarded, Plugger."

"You bet! This signal isn't all, Mauler, by a long chalk. We've got a secret password. Besides, if any infernal spy comes prowling around here, we've got things fixed so that——"

Another voice interrupted him.

It appeared to come from the wall of the building—a quick, sibilant whisper.

"Who's there?"

Finley turned quickly and said:

"Two friends."

"How am I to know that?"

"By our secret password."

"What is our password?"

"Barley."

"Wait."

Watching constantly, listening intently, Chick heard the shooting of heavy bolts, then saw the door quickly opened. Not a ray of light came from within. Both men entered. The door was noiselessly closed, though Chick again could hear the bolts when they were forced into their sockets.

"Got things fixed for a spy, eh?" he said to himself. "I wish the rascal had had time to say just how things are fixed. I'll take a chance, nevertheless, and see what more I can learn."

Chick again waited briefly, hearing nothing more, and he then examined the fence through which the crooks had passed. He found that two of the boards were held in place with nails that could be easily drawn from the stringer, leaving them still in the boards. Quietly removing both, he stood them against the fence and crept through the opening.

"There must be a push button on the door," he said to himself, approaching it. "I'll not venture ringing, but will learn enough about this covert way to insure quick work a little later. H'm! no push button, eh? Ah, by Jove, I have it. The head of this nail near the casing serves for a button. That's precisely where Finley placed his hand."

Further inspection revealed a round hole just under a loose edge of one of the weather-worn clapboards, through which the whispered question from within had issued.

"It's a good, strong door, all right," thought Chick, while he inspected it, standing on a flagstone that served for a step. "It would withstand a raid long enough for the crooks to escape by some other way. I reckon I'll slip out and telephone to Nick, when he returns from——"

Chick's train of thought was abruptly broken. Bent upon conferring with Nick before making any aggressive move, he turned to retrace his steps, and beheld a man confronting him in the dim light—the man who had followed him across the street, and who now stood barring his way to the hole in the fence.

He was a well-built, dark-featured man, with a pointed beard—and with a revolver suggestively displayed in his right hand.

Otherwise, he appeared to have no immediate desperate design, for he said quietly:

"Hello, pal!"

"Hello, you!" Chick replied, without the slightest sign of opposing the other.

Nevertheless, Chick instantly recognized the speaker's voice. It was one easily remembered, once having been heard, a voice as hard as nails and as cold as ice, evincing a vicious nature and nerves of steel.

"Nate Herrick's voice," flashed through Chick's mind. "The chief crook himself, by thunder!"

He stood absolutely motionless, however, for he had caught the threatening glint in Herrick's searching eyes, also a gleam of starlight from his ready weapon, and Chick saw that Herrick could drop him instantly, if necessary, and he knew it was a deed of which he was entirely capable.

"I thought I knew you, but I reckon I don't," said Herrick, still with sinister quietude.

"I've got nothing on you, then," Chick coolly replied. "I don't know you."

"What are you doing here?"

"I might ask you the same question."

"You'd be none the wiser for the asking, if I dodged the questions as you have done."

"I'm some dodger, I am," Chick dryly announced.

"You are, eh?"

"That's what."

"You can't dodge me," said Herrick, with a covert sneer. "Try it and you'll never do any more dodging. I've a right to be here."

"Do you always sneak round here with a gun in your hand?" Chick asked pointedly.

"I do, you can bet on it, after having seen a fellow of your cloth prowling around here. Who are you?"

"My name is Foley—James Foley."

"What do you want?"

"There's many a thing I want."

"Cut that! What are you doing in here?"

"Looking for some one," said Chick coolly.

Not for an instant had he ceased watching the notorious crook. He was waiting for a chance, if even the shadow of an opportunity appeared, to divert Herrick's aim with a quick kick, and then grapple with the rascal. He edged a little nearer to him with his last response, but Herrick's keen eyes instantly detected the aggressive move.

He drew back a little and his revolver leaped to a level with Chick's breast.

"Looking for some one, are you?" he said icily. "Well, you've found some one, all right, and I'll introduce you to others. Shove up your hands! I'll find out just who you are and what you want here. Don't move foot or finger, mind you, or you'll be one of the has beens! Hist!"

The last was a quick, sharp whisper.

Chick heard the near door immediately opened.

Three men hurriedly emerged, two of whom seized him from behind, while the third pressed a revolver to his head. Chick felt the chill of the steel, but he did not shrink. Instead, without a sign of resistance, he said curtly:

"Don't be fussy, you fellows. Point that toy another way. I'm entirely at your service."

CHAPTER IV.

A VAIN SUBTERFUGE.

Chick Carter realized that he had no sane course but to submit to the rascals surrounding him. He accepted the situation philosophically, therefore, with a determination to make the most of it, knowing that he was likely to discover who all of the rascals were and of what their designs consisted. Given that advantage, he reasoned that he might later find a way to turn the tables on them.

Chick had thought of a subterfuge, moreover, which he reasoned might serve his purpose, and he appeared entirely unconcerned over the threatening attitude of his four captors.

"Tie his hands behind him, Jimmie," Herrick curtly directed. "Make sure they are fast and then take him in. I'll follow."

One of the men hastened to obey, producing a strong cord with which he quickly secured the detective's wrists, and then passed the cord twice around him, so binding his arms that he scarce could move them.

Chick submitted without a murmur, and then was led through the door and into a gloomy entry. He heard the faint rustle of skirts, but could see no woman in the darkness, though he immediately recalled one of the sentences in the patch-work problem:

"Her ladyship now wears three rings on one hand and two on the other."

"Nell Garside is here, by Jove, lying low with her knavish running mate," thought Chick. "She evidently acts as a sentinel at this door. I've got in wrong, all right, but I'll try to fool the rascals."

He heard the door closed and the bolts shot into their sockets. Then, grasped firmly by two of the gang, he was led down a short flight of steps, and the flash of a search lamp revealed another door.

It was opened by the man who was leading the way, and Chick was then conducted into a basement room of considerable size, in which several empty boxes served for chairs, a larger one for a table. Plugger Finley was seated on one of the boxes. He was alone, and complacently engaged in filling a brier pipe.

In one corner of the room was a carpenter's tool chest, closed and locked. A door in an opposite wall stood ajar, but Chick could see only that it led into an adjoining room.

An oil lamp in a bracket on one of the walls lighted the uninviting scene, as well as the threatening frowns on the faces of the crooks into whose hands Chick had fallen.

Two of them forced him to sit on one of the boxes, while another secured the door after Herrick had entered. The latter at once took a seat directly opposite the detec-

tive, though some six feet away, and waved the two men aside.

"Now, James Foley, if that's your name, we'll resume our interrupted colloquy," said he, with icy complacency. "Looking for some one, were you?"

Chick straightened up on the box and glanced around indifferently. He already had recognized the two men in the better light, one Jimmie Daley, a professional burglar quite recently liberated from Sing Sing. The other was a yeggman named Tony Brock, whom Chick twice had arrested. He betrayed no sign of recognition, however, but coolly returned Herrick's searching scrutiny and replied:

"That's just what I was doing—looking for some one."

"Well, you found some one, didn't you?" sneered Herrick.

"That's what, and then some," Chick said tritely.

"You wonder, perhaps, why they showed up so suddenly and why we have brought you in here."

"No, not much."

"You don't?"

"No."

"Why is that?"

"I can guess."

"How so?" demanded Herrick, scowling.

"Because I happen to know something about the man I was looking for," said Chick pointedly. "I was not surprised to find him ducking under cover."

"What do you know about him?"

"Not much, as far as that goes," Chick admitted. "I only know him by sight. He lives in the same city I came from. I've been in New York only two days."

"What city is that?"

"Chicago."

"Is that where you came from?"

"Yes."

"What's the man's name?"

"Tom Magee," said Chick promptly. "He's sometimes called Mauler Magee. I've seen him many a time in Chicago."

Herrick looked puzzled. He would not have believed that any one, save his own confederates, knew that Mauler Magee then was in New York. This seemed in a measure to confirm Chick's statements, of course, as the latter had foreseen, which led him to adopt this subterfuge, hoping he could worm his way into friendly relations with the gang.

"What was your business in Chicago?" asked Herrick, after a moment.

"I didn't have any regular business."

"What did you do for a living?"

"Anything that came my way—or anybody," said Chick significantly.

This didn't impress Herrick deeply, however, for he still frowned darkly.

"How did you know Magee was coming here?" he demanded.

"I didn't know it," said Chick promptly. Then, with a nod in the direction of Plugger Finley, he added: "I saw him crossing Broadway with that fellow. I knew him the instant I put my lamps on him, and I reckoned there might be something doing, the Mauler being so far from home. So I followed them around here. That's all there was to it."

"Does Magee know you by sight?"

"Give it up," said Chick. "How can I tell? Ain't it enough that I know him?"

"No, not by a long chalk," Herrick sharply retorted. "We'll have to find out. Call him in here, Plugger. Let him have a look at this fellow."

Finley hastened to obey and vanished into the adjoining room.

Chick heard the rustle of skirts again. He had a momentary glimpse through the open door. He saw what appeared to be the cabinetmaker's workroom, for the floor was strewn with shavings and a bench stood against one of the walls.

Finley returned in a very few seconds, however, closely followed by Mauler Magee. That the latter had been listening to all that had been said was immediately apparent.

"There's no need for questions," he growled, gazing sharply at Chick. "I reckon he's been giving you a big bluff. I don't know him from a side of leather."

"Never seen him, eh?" questioned Herrick.

"No, never."

"Well, I've seen you in Chicago, Magee, all the same," cried Chick, persisting in his subterfuge. "I reckoned you might like to see a fellow from home and give him a glad hand. That's the only reason why I followed you here. Since you're not—well, I'll get out and go about my business."

"I guess not!" Herrick exclaimed derisively. "You'll wait right here until we learn just who you are and what you really had up your sleeve."

"I've given it to you straight," Chick insisted.

"I'll not take your word for it," Herrick retorted. "Give his beard a yank, Plugger, and see if it's real. Then search for letters, or anything else that might reveal his identity. If he is on the level—— Oh, by thunder!" Herrick leaped to his feet, staring. "We're up against that infernal detective—Chick Carter."

Plugger Finley had, as directed, given Chick's beard a vigorous yank. It came off, of course, as well as the mustache connected with it, and further subterfuge was out of the question.

Chick had seen it coming, however, and was prepared to meet the more threatening situation. He ignored the mingled anger and amazement that immediately arose, but drew himself up and said, a bit sternly:

"That's quite correct, Herrick; you are up against Chick Carter. You ought to know him very well by this time. That you also may know that you have nothing on him, I call you by name and suggest that we continue this talk under true colors."

Though he had shrunk with dismay, at first, Herrick almost instantly pulled himself together. He checked with a gesture the threatening cries of his confederates, saying sharply:

"Don't lose your heads. We had much better get wise at this stage of the game, than have him trick us as he once has tricked me."

"That's right, too," Finley agreed, with a growl.

"But Nick himself may——" began Daley."

"Oh, he's got nothing on us," Herrick interrupted confidently. "I'm sure this infernal meddler came here alone, for I saw him shadow Magee and Finley around the building. He was nosing around to see what he could learn. That shows plainly enough that he has nothing definite on us. There's nothing to fear, then, since we have him unmasked and securely in our clutches."

"But how did he get wise at all?" cried Magee. "How

did he know me and that I was coming to New York? That was to be kept secret."

"Tell us how," snapped Herrick, turning quickly to the listening detective.

Chick laughed a bit derisively.

"Haven't you learned, Herrick, that it's not easy for rascals to hide their doings from Nick Carter?" he inquired, in taunting tones.

"That don't answer my question," said Herrick, scowling.

"I'm not likely to answer any questions put by you fellows," Chick replied.

"Is that so?"

"Precisely so."

"We'll find a way to make you."

"That's up to you, Herrick; but I'll tell you in advance that you will not succeed."

Herrick did not reply. He gazed for a moment at the stern, defiant face of the detective, then turned abruptly to Finley and Magee, with whom he conferred in whispers for several minutes.

One by one the rest of the gang joined them. But their discussion was held in tones too low to reach Chick's ears, and he could infer only from their lowering looks of what it consisted.

That the rascals soon discovered encouraging features in the situation, however, became apparent, for Herrick suddenly turned and said, with ominous assurance:

"All right, Carter, keep your trap closed for the present, if you like. Understand one thing, nevertheless!"

"What's that?" asked Chick indifferently.

"Nothing you have done, or can do, including Nick Carter and all the rest of his push, will block the game that we are now playing."

"Don't bank too heavily on that, Herrick," Chick coolly advised.

"I know what I'm talking about."

"Very well, then. I'll take your word for it."

"You have no alternative," sneered Herrick. "You Carters have put it across me twice, but there'll be no third time. We'll guard against that, all right, and make good in spite of all that Nick Carter can do. I'll have spies on him within an hour. They'll get him, too, sooner or later."

"Don't overlook one other possibility," said Chick.

"What's that?"

"Nick may get them."

"Bah!" Herrick scornfully blurted. "Don't you bank on that."

Then, swinging sharply around, as if this intercourse was obnoxious to him, he cried sharply to Jimmie Daley:

"Where's Nell? Isn't she here?"

"Sure!" Daley quickly answered. "She's in yonder."

"Tell her to make ready for a shift to the Plugger's place," Herrick curtly commanded. "She'll be more useful there after to-night. Then tell Nelson to find a box that will hold this infernal sleuth. We'll shift him to safer quarters before morning."

CHAPTER V.

THE WHEEL WITHIN.

It was on Friday, unlucky Friday, that Chick Carter met with the mishap described, and fell into the hands of the gang of desperadoes he was seeking.

Nick Carter wore a worried look the following Monday morning.

Not a word had been heard from Chick since the previous Friday night.

Nick was having his breakfast a full hour earlier than usual, bent upon resuming his strenuous efforts of the past forty-eight hours to find some trace of his missing assistant, all of which had proved utterly vain, when Patsy Garvan rushed out of the study in the detective's residence and entered the breakfast room.

"Ah!" Nick exclaimed, looking up with countenance lighting. "You have heard from him?"

"From Chick—no, chief, hang it!" cried Patsy. "I wish I had. But I have heard something else."

"Well?"

"A telephone message from Cyrus Langham, president of the Federal Railway corporation. There has been a big robbery in their branch banking establishment, the Federal Trust. Half a million stolen."

"By Gad!" Nick threw down his napkin. "You heard from Langham himself?"

"Yes. He wouldn't wait to talk with you, but said you must go to the bank at once."

"Where was he?"

"He was phoning from his residence, and said he would be at the bank when you arrived."

"He will have to move lively, then," declared Nick, rising. "Did you learn anything more?"

"Only that the crime was discovered by the janitor, who opens the Federal Building at half past six each morning. It now is only a little after seven. He telephoned to President Langham at once, who directed him to call a policeman, but to tell him there must be nothing disturbed until you arrived. He then called up our office, but would not wait to talk with you. I told him you would go up there."

"Certainly," said Nick. "By Jove, this is a sequel I have been expecting!"

"The sequel to that patch-work problem?"

"Yes."

"That's just what I thought, chief, the moment Langham mentioned the burglary. Nate Herrick's gang evidently has made good."

"This is the third time Langham has been victimized by that rascal."

"It's odds, too," added Patsy, "that Chick got in wrong with the gang, and now is in their clutches."

"Surely, or been turned down," said Nick. "Otherwise he would have prevented this job, for he must have picked up Mauler Magee and the recipient of Herrick's letter. That was last Friday night. His absence since then speaks for itself. This robbery is the culmination of the whole business."

"Not the culmination, chief, I hope."

"No, not by a long chalk," Nick gravely declared. "You are right, Patsy. The culmination of the whole business will be when—— Well, that's up to us. Come on, if you're ready."

"You bet I'm ready, chief," said Patsy, who had been hurriedly shifting into street garments. "I'm just itching to look into this job. It ought to supply us with a clew to Chick's whereabouts—or his fate."

"His fate—God forbid!" Nick muttered, as he led the way from the house.

A quick run in a taxicab brought them to the front entrance of the Federal Building in precisely ten minutes.

Two policemen were standing on the steps.

A sergeant from the precinct station, also another man with grizzled hair and beard, were waiting in the broad main corridor, on one side of which were the offices and huge steel safe of the branch banking establishment, a co-operative institution conducted for the benefit of the thousands of employees of the Federal Railway Company, with a view to promoting habits of thrift and saving.

Nick Carter was immediately recognized by the policemen, who greeted him respectfully when, followed by Patsy, he sprang from his motor and hastened into the building.

"Good morning, Sanders," said Nick, addressing the sergeant. "How long have you been here?"

"Only a few moments, Mr. Carter," was the reply. "That is to say, I have had only time to glance around. It's a big job, and a bad one."

"Langham has not arrived?"

"Not yet."

"But he soon will come, sir," put in the other man.

"This is the janitor, John Baxter," said the sergeant. "He discovered the crime after opening the building, as usual. We cannot get into the bank until Mr. Langham comes, or some one else having keys. But you can get an idea of the job—here, step this way. Have a look for yourself."

Nick followed him to one of the doors of the banking department. Through its plate-glass window could be seen the face of the huge steel safe. It was open, and the floor was covered with scattered books, papers, and débris that told the story. All was quite plainly visible in the yellowish light shed from an incandescent lamp in the ceiling.

"But I cannot fathom it, sir, I cannot fathom it," repeated the janitor, still at Nick's elbow, before the latter could speak.

"Fathom what?" asked Nick, noting his intonation.

"Why there is no daylight, sir. What cuts it off? That's what beats me, Mr. Carter."

"Explain," said Nick, turning to him. "I don't get you."

"Why, sir, it's like this," Baxter nervously explained. "Three incandescent lamps are left burning in the bank each night, sir, so that the safe may be seen from the street. Phil Craige, the night watchman, puts them out every morning before he goes home. The daylight from the front window then ought to strike on the safe, whether the lamps are burning or not—but it don't! That's what beats me, Mr. Carter."

"There is a watchman here each night?" questioned Nick.

"Yes, sir, always."

"At what hour does he go on duty?"

"Seven o'clock. I always remain here until he comes."

"And he quits and goes home?"

"At half past six each morning," Baxter hurriedly responded. "I'm always here at seven. Craige has a key to the rear door, sir, which admits him into the bank department. I have a front-door key, admitting me to the building, but no key to the bank doors. The bank is run separate from the rest of the business of the Federal Company, and a thick, reënforced wall divides it from this corridor. There are no side windows, sir, only the big front one on Broadway, and one in the rear wall."

"I understand," said Nick.

"But the daylight—why doesn't it strike on the safe?" Baxter again questioned perplexedly. "That's what beats me, sir. And why didn't Craige switch out the lights before he went home?"

"Something may have happened to Craige," said Nick, with ominous import.

"Mebbe so."

"You cannot get into the banking department, you say?"

"No, sir."

"The rear door——"

"That is closed and locked, sir, as usual," Baxter interposed. "I've been round there."

"Let's have a look at the front part of the bank," said Nick, turning.

"You cannot see in, sir. This is the only door having a window. The other door is solid oak."

"I'll find a way to look in," Nick replied.

He strode toward the street while speaking, passing the broad main door leading into the front part of the bank, in which were the desks and counters of the clerks, also that portion available to its patrons. All were in a long room, about twenty-four feet in width, running straight back from the street.

Nick did not pause at the door, but hastened out of the building, followed by Baxter and the police sergeant.

Patsy Garvan had remained on the front steps, talking with the two policemen.

"This way, Patsy," said Nick. "I want you."

"I'm with you, chief," Patsy cried, following.

Nick led the way to the front window. It consisted of a single huge pane of plate glass, the lower edge of which was three feet above the sidewalk.

Within was a decorated wire screen, parallel with the glass and about five feet high, which prevented passing persons from staring into the bank during the day and detracting the attention of the clerks.

One could easily see through this screen after dark, however, when the lamps within were lighted, enabling the night policemen to glance in when passing and be sure that all was well, as he was expected to do.

Nick stepped close to the window and tried to peer through the screen. He could see only two bulbs of light in the stucco work ornamenting the ceiling, though the outlines of the nearest desks were dimly discernible. Turning to Patsy after a moment, he said quickly, crouching a little.

"Stand on my shoulders, Patsy, so you can look over the screen. Lend him a hand, Sanders."

Both hastened to obey, and in a moment Patsy Garvan was perched erect upon the detective's shoulders.

"Now," said Nick, standing close to the window; "tell me what you see."

"I see the whole business, chief," said he. "The desks and counter, the brass lattice above the counter, the tellers' windows, the space for the public, and——"

"Can you see the safe?" Nick interrupted.

"Yes, of course."

"Plainly?"

"Perfectly."

"Which way does it face?"

"This way," said Patsy. "It's about forty feet from this window, and it stands straight across the room. One side of it touches the right-hand wall, but the other is about four feet from the opposite wall. There is a door on the left side, which appears to lead into a back room."

"That's nearly right," said Baxter. "It leads into a pas-

sageway on that side of the safe, back of which is President Langham's private office and a short flight of steps leading to the rear door of the banking department. That door is protected with a big steel grating."

"Anything else, Patsy?" asked Nick.

"Nothing worth mentioning," said Patsy.

He had not followed Nick into the building, be it remembered, nor heard what passed between him and the janitor while they were viewing the looted safe.

"There appears to be nothing wrong, then?" Nick said inquiringly.

"Not a thing, chief."

"The safe looks all right?"

"Sure thing. There is no sign of a break."

"What's that?" cried Baxter amazedly. "You need a new pair of eyes. The safe is wide open. The door has been drilled——"

"Drilled be hanged!" cried Patsy, interrupting. "The door is closed. There is no sign of a burglary."

"Nonsense!" Sanders exclaimed. "How can that be? We've seen——"

"Not what Patsy sees," Nick cut in decisively. "Come down, Patsy. Your heels are sharp," he dryly added, crouching for Patsy to spring down to the sidewalk.

"What do you mean?" inquired Sanders perplexedly. "If he saw the safe, he must have seen——"

"He did not see the safe," Nick again interrupted.

"What's that, chief?" questioned Patsy, now also puzzled. "I didn't see the safe?"

"No!"

"Gee! that beats me, chief, too," Patsy declared, still incredulous, yet somehow feeling that Nick must be right. "I certainly saw——"

"You saw only a mask, Patsy."

"A mask?"

"I mean some kind of a crafty device resembling the front of the safe and that end of the bank, so perfectly resembling them that it must have deceived the policeman who looked in there when passing, as well as all other observers familiar with the scene. It evidently occupies a position a few feet this side of the safe, and it must have served to conceal the crooks while they were at work in the intervening space."

"Oh, by thunder!" Patsy exclaimed, breaking in. "You mean a sort of false partition."

"Exactly."

"But——"

"The evidence permits of no other conclusion," Nick insisted. "I have seen the safe itself and know that it has been robbed. The crooks must have escaped hours ago with their plunder, however, and we shall gain nothing by forcing the bank door in order to enter immediately. We'll wait until Mr. Langham arrives. You will then find that I am right, I think, and that——"

"This should be Mr. Langham," said Sanders, interrupting.

A taxicab was rapidly approaching, and the sergeant's prediction proved to be correct. When the conveyance swerved to the curbing, the portly president of the Federal Railway Company, as well as of its branch banking establishment, hurriedly alighted and joined the group on the sidewalk. In spite of the disastrous information he had received, he appeared as composed as if the loss of half a million was not a matter over which one should lose one's head.

"I came as quickly as possible," he said, after cordially greeting Nick and nodding to the others. "What have you learned?"

"Enough to confirm the report," said Nick. "There has been a big robbery committed. Let's lose no time, now, in learning the details."

President Langham led the way into the bank.

CHAPTER VI.

THE FALSE PARTITION.

Nick Carter's solution of the mystery proved to be entirely correct. A close inspection of the scene within revealed one of the most crafty and skillfully constructed devices ever adopted by a gang of crooks for the purpose of masking them from view while engaged in their infamous work.

Four feet in front of the looted safe stood a false partition reaching from the floor to the ceiling, so made, and of such light material that its several easily handled sections could be set up in a very few moments, as easily and quickly, in fact, as the back flat of an ordinary stage setting.

It was held in place from behind with rods screwed to the floor, while the front of it corresponded in every detail with the scene it masked. The thin sheathing met the counter, the ceiling, and the floor, without leaving a crack or crevice through which a ray of light could pass.

The semblance of a door and its threshold, the false front of the safe, made of lacquered sheet tin, perfectly polished and with protruding handles and combination dial, the surrounding woodwork, the corniced top—all looked precisely like the real partition and safe front, even when seen from only a few feet away. Viewed from the street, therefore, the fraud almost defied detection, the difference in the length of the deep room and the relation of the various features at that end of it being hardly perceptible from that distance.

President Langham gazed amazedly at the extraordinary contrivance.

"Good heavens!" he exclaimed, after a brief inspection. "Who would have dreamed of such trickery as this?"

"Only crooks whose perverted minds are constantly employed in devising ways and means by which to accomplish their evil ends," Nick replied. "It's remarkably well done. I never saw a more perfect piece of joiner's work made under such conditions."

"Conditions?"

"Certainly," Nick replied, then proceeded to explain. "The whole business was most cleverly planned and constructed for this job. The partition was made by some exceedingly clever workman, and was brought here in sections by the gang during Saturday night. They selected that night because Sunday would intervene before the bank would again be opened. How about the building? Is it usually open on the Sabbath?"

"No, never," said Langham. "That is to say, not for business purposes."

"Even if it were, the burglary would not have been discovered unless some one took the trouble to look through the window of the other door. This device cannot be seen through the window screen in front, moreover, and even if the two lamps left each night were seen from outside, it would only have been inferred that the

watchman forgot to extinguish them. They would hardly be noticed, however, during the day."

"But by night the policeman whose beat takes him by the front window——"

"He would not have discovered the fraud," Nick interposed. "I have had Patsy look over the screen, but he detected nothing wrong."

"Philip Craige, our night watchman——" Langham again began, but Nick checked him with a gesture.

"Let's view all of the evidence, Langham, before indulging in speculations," said he. "We cannot pass through this partition without breaking it down. That must not be done until I have examined it more carefully. You have a key to the other door. We'll go round and enter from that direction."

Nick led the way while speaking, leaving one of the policemen to prevent anything being disturbed. Passing through the corridor, he unlocked the door through which he first had gazed, and then entered the four-foot space back of the false partition, a view of which from the corridor was prevented by the open door of the passageway leading to Langham's private office and also to the flight of steps making down to the rear door mentioned by the janitor.

The investigation that immediately followed shed a much more tragic light on the case. Mingled with the tracks of muddy feet on the stone steps and tesselated floor were splashes of blood; while the heavy steel grating, an inner door protecting the one leading into a narrow, rear court outside, was standing wide open, though the outer door was closed and locked.

"By Jove, those look ominous," Nick declared, upon seeing the stains of blood. "They may spell murder."

"The night watchman?" gasped Langham.

"If anybody."

"Good heavens! I hope——"

"You must be prepared for whatever we find," Nick interposed. "The gang that did this job consists of knaves who do not shrink from bloodshed. Ah! I feared it."

The last, uttered still more gravely, told the story.

Turning back, Nick had hurriedly opened the door of Langham's private office, which was a single large room lighted by a window in the rear wall of the building.

There, prostrate on the floor, lay the body of the night watchman, his skull fractured by a frightful blow with a bludgeon. One glance convinced Nick that the man had been dead since late Saturday night.

"It's just what I feared, Langham," said he, when the latter shrank back with a shudder. "The miscreants have murdered him."

"Are you sure he is dead?"

"Yes, and he has been for many hours."

"Alas, poor Craige!" Langham groaned, while Patsy and the police sergeant hastened to examine the body. "This is terrible—doubly terrible! He was an honest, faithful fellow."

"Are you, Langham, sure of that?" Nick asked pointedly.

"Yes, absolutely sure," Mr. Langham forcibly assured. "He has been in our employ for many years. I would have trusted him with my life."

"He must have been duped, then, in some way," said Nick, stepping back into the passageway to view the double doors. "I suppose this interior steel door is always closed at night?"

"Yes, yes, of course," Langham replied. "It is designed to enable the night watchman to open the outer door without unlocking the grating, in case any one might call to see him, or if he should have occasion to briefly leave the bank. In that case, he can secure the interior door, which has a combination lock, before opening the outer one."

"H'm! I see," said Nick. "Plainly, then, Craige was duped into admitting some one——"

"Impossible!" Langham interrupted. "He had strict orders never to do so. I know that Craige would not have disobeyed them."

"He must have been duped in some way," Nick insisted. "The crooks would not have entered from Broadway. Craige either came to this door to talk with one of them, probably one supposed to be a friend, or else——"

"I say, chief, this may explain it," cried Patsy, who had hastened from the private office and heard what Nick was saying. "I found it in the side pocket of the watchman's coat."

It was a crumpled sheet of paper, on which were written a few lines with a lead pencil, which Patsy already had read.

"What is it?" Nick inquired.

Patsy read it aloud:

"Come home at once, Phil, darling, for God's sake. Mollie has been hit by a taxicab, and the doctor says she will die in a short time. She's crying for you, Phil. I'm sending this by Brayley, our lodger, who says he will wait in the bank while you are here. Come quick, Phil. It might save her. She's crying for you!"

"It's a letter from Craige's wife," cried Mr. Langham, interrupting.

"Evidently," said Patsy, glancing up. "It is signed—Nora."

"That's his wife's name," said Langham. "They have a little girl named Mary, called Mollie. Heavens! has she been killed, also?"

"No, no, nothing of the kind," said Nick, who had taken the letter from Patsy and hastily read it. "This is only a blind."

"A blind?"

"Precisely. It is the means by which Craige was lured from the bank, or into admitting the man who brought the letter. Lodger, indeed! We shall find that he was one of the gang. Where is Craige's home, Mr. Langham?"

"In Sixth Avenue."

"Do you know the number?"

"I do," cried the janitor, at once supplying the required information.

"Go over there, Patsy, and see what you can learn," Nick directed. "See Mrs. Craige and show her the letter. Find out how her husband's absence during yesterday has been explained to her. He certainly has been dead since Saturday night. Get all the information she can give you about the lodger, also, and return as soon as possible. Some quick work must be done, if we are to track these rascals."

Patsy was hastening from the bank before the last was fairly said.

Without further discussion of the letter, which he felt sure he had rightly interpreted, Nick immediately began an examination of the looted safe. A few minutes enabled him to determine how it had been opened.

"It's as plain as twice two," said he, turning to his waiting observers. "The work is that of an expert, named Thomas Magee. He was brought here from Chicago expressly to do this job."

"Goodness!" President Langham exclaimed, staring. "How in the world, Carter, do you know that?"

"It's part of my business, Langham, to know such things," Nick replied evasively. "This Magee used to work in a safe manufactory. An electric drill was used in this case, and a hole made through which Magee, probably with a tool of his own invention, was able to break the governor regulating the movement of the time clock. It was set to open the safe at nine this morning, I suppose, but the breaking of the governor caused the mechanism to run down in a very short time, precisely as a clock does when the pendulum is removed."

"By Jove, I guess you're right, Mr. Carter," said Sergeant Sanders, who also had been closely inspecting the work.

"I know I am right," Nick replied. "I've seen a break of this kind once before. The rest of the work was child's play for the rascals. They must have got away with their plunder early Sunday morning. What did the safe contain, Mr. Langham?"

"About twenty thousand dollars in cash, Carter, and Federal Railway bonds and stock securities aggregating nearly half a million."

"Negotiable securities?"

"Yes. They can be easily turned into cash."

"H'm! that's bad," said Nick gravely. "We must, as I have said, get in some quick work. It now is after eight o'clock," he added, glancing at his watch. "You should open for business at nine. I will make another examination of this partition, Langham, and you then may have it removed. I'll leave you, Sanders, to notify the coroner and take charge of the murder end of the case. I have other work in view."

Nick did not wait for an answer. He returned through the corridor and at once began a more thorough examination of the front of the false partition.

One feature of it already had aroused a suspicion that was shaping his present course. It was a feature that would have escaped the notice of most detectives. Only one in a thousand would, even if it were noticed, have attached any special significance to it.

Nevertheless, Nick still was thus engaged when Patsy Garvan returned from the home of the murdered watchman.

"You were right, chief," said he, when Nick turned to listen. "The letter to Craige was a blind. His wife did not send it, though the writing resembles hers. It was a forgery prepared by Brayley, probably, who has been lodging with the Craiges for nearly two months."

"Could Mrs. Craige tell you anything definite about him?" Nick inquired.

"Only what he has told her, which, of course, cuts no ice," replied Patsy. "He was a stranger when he went there, but he succeeded in gaining their friendship and confidence, all right, in order to turn this trick. There's nothing else to it."

"How did he explain her husband's absence yesterday?"

"He told her late Saturday evening that Craige was going to Albany with him early Sunday morning, immediately after leaving the bank, and that both would return in time for Craige to go on duty here Sunday evening, as usual."

"H'm, I see!" said Nick.

"Brayley did return last evening," Patsy added. "He then told Mrs. Craige that her husband had gone directly to the bank, not having time to come home. But Brayley was missing this morning. When I arrived at the house, Mrs. Craige was getting ready to come here, wondering why her husband had not come home to breakfast, as usual. I broke the truth to her as gently as possible, of course, and then came away."

"It's about what I expected," said Nick. "Brayley is one of the gang. That name is an alias. His relations with the Craiges show plainly that this job was begun at least two months ago. He wormed his way into their confidence, as you say, only in order to turn this dastardly trick. But he shall pay the price, Patsy, the full price —take my word for that."

CHAPTER VII.

NICK CARTER'S CLEW.

It was after nine o'clock when Nick Carter received Patsy's report concerning Craige and his treacherous lodger. That he had sized up the circumstances correctly, that Brayley was one of the gang, that the name was fictitious, and that his friendly relations with the Craiges during the past two months were designed solely to dupe the watchman in the manner described—of these features of the case Nick Carter had not a doubt.

The news of the double crime then had spread. A throng of people had gathered both in and outside of the Federal Building. Clerks had arrived. Reporters were flocking to the scene. The coroner and other officials were occupying Langham's private office. The corridor and stairways were crowded. Inquisitive intruders, stirred with morbid curiosity, filled the narrow court back of the building, and some of the policemen wondered that Nick Carter had given no orders to prevent them, lest evidence possibly existing there should be hopelessly obliterated.

Nick had an object, however, in not excluding these intruders. He knew that the crooks must have approached from that direction when undertaking the burglary. He reasoned that they very possibly had had quarters in one of the numerous inferior buildings in the rear, and Nick was quick to foresee that he might derive some advantage from displaying no immediate suspicion in that direction.

He had, besides, made one discovery of which he wanted to take immediate advantage. He had found a single clew which he wished to follow up without delay—that one feature of the false partition which, as already stated, would have escaped the notice of any other detective.

Nick had been waiting only for Patsy to return. Having heard his report, which had been quickly and quietly made, he turned to President Langham, who was talking with a group of his clerks near the desk of one of the bookkeepers.

"I want merely another word with you, Mr. Langham, and then I'll be going," said he.

"Going?" questioned Langham, surprised. "You have not finished your investigations?"

"Yes, for the present."

"But——"

Langham began to object, but Nick checked him with a gesture.

"Do not infer that I shall leave anything undone, Mr. Langham, or any stones unturned, in order to track these crooks and recover your property," said he. "Sergeant Sanders and the coroner will look after the less important details. My work lies in other directions. By the way," he added, "who was the architect of this building?"

"Geoffrey Paulding. He has an office in Fifth Avenue."

"And the builders?"

"Damon & Jackson."

"I know the firm," said Nick. "You have occupied the building about three years, I believe?"

"Three years next month."

"Have there been any changes made in this room since then?"

"No, none," said Langham, wondering at the question.

"Any repair work?"

"No."

"The safe, desks, counters, and cabinet work—all are as they were originally completed?" Nick inquired, somewhat impressively.

"Yes, precisely," was the reply. "Why do you ask?"

"Merely for information," said Nick, a bit dryly. "That is all I care to know at present, moreover, and all I care to impart. You now may have this false partition removed, Mr. Langham, and resume business. Be sure, in the meantime, that I am not idle," he pointedly added. "Come, Patsy, we'll be off."

Patsy Garvan, even, though perfectly familiar with Nick's methods, was somewhat surprised at the detective's abrupt departure. He knew, nevertheless, that Nick must have made some very important discovery and had something up his sleeve, as appeared in his first remark after they had elbowed a passage through the throng outside and were crossing Broadway.

"Gee! this looks like business, chief, for fair," said he. "What have you discovered?"

"A single clew, Patsy, worth all the others," Nick replied.

"A single clew?"

"Yes. That false partition—or, more precisely, the absolute accuracy with which it was made."

"I noticed that, chief," said Patsy. "It joins the walls, the sides of the safe, and the slope of the counter without leaving a sign of a crack or crevice."

"That's the very point."

"What do you make of it?"

"It suggests several very significant questions," said Nick. "The work was that of an expert cabinetmaker, one having more than ordinary skill. But how did he get his measurements for making that partition?"

"Gee! that is, indeed, a very pertinent question," said Patsy, quick to see the point.

"He could not have obtained them during business hours, nor during the night, assuming that Craige was honest," Nick continued. "No changes have been made, nor repair work done, moreover, since the bank was first occupied. Obviously, then, the measurements could not have been made under those conditions."

"Surely not, chief."

"Eliminating them, then, there remains only one probable conclusion," said Nick: "The false partition must have been made by some man employed on the original work, who either remembered the exact measurements, or now has in his possession the plans showing that part of the room."

"By Jove, that's right, too," Patsy declared. "No ordinary carpenter made the counters and cabinets in that bank. They are the work of an expert joiner. I see, now, why you questioned Mr. Langham about the architect and builders. You are out to see who did the original work."

"That hits the nail on the head, Patsy."

"Gee! it's a clew worth following, all right. Where are you going, chief, for a starter?"

"We'll call on the builders, Damon & Jackson. I'm acquainted with both and know they are thoroughly reliable. They may, nevertheless, have dishonest men in their employ. We'll see what we can learn."

A call on the firm mentioned, however, brought to light that all of the carpenter work in the Federal Building had been done under subcontracts, that in the bank department having been done by a firm that made a specialty of counters and cabinet work, Messrs. Tate & Godbold.

Eleven o'clock, therefore, found Nick talking with the junior member of that firm, to whom he briefly stated his mission.

"Why, yes, Mr. Carter, we did the work you mention," said Godbold. "But I don't think I can aid you materially, for most of that work was done by a man no longer in our employ."

"What is his name?" Nick inquired.

"John Nelson."

"Why did he quit working for you?"

"We were obliged, much to our regret, to discharge him because of his bad habits. He was a very skillful workman, but we could not stand for his ugly disposition, his insolence and intemperance. We discharged him two years ago. In some respects, in fact, Nelson is a decidedly bad egg."

Nick already had come to that conclusion. He felt sure that he had picked up the trail he was seeking. He did not disclose the occasion for his inquiries, however, but asked quite indifferently:

"Is Nelson still in New York?"

"I believe so, but I do not know for whom he is working."

"Have you seen him recently?"

"About two months ago."

"Where?"

"He was here, Mr. Carter, and had a talk with our foreman, Mr. Page. The latter afterward stated that Nelson wanted to examine some of our old plans and specifications of work that he had done, some of which he wanted to duplicate."

"Do you keep your old plans and specifications on file?"

"Yes, always."

"Did Nelson state which he wanted to examine?"

"I do not know," said Godbold. "I will call Mr. Page. He may be able to inform you."

"Do so, please."

The foreman appeared in a very few moments from one of the workrooms. He could inform Nick, however, only that Nelson had examined several sets of plans, unob-

served at the time, and that he did not know in which of them Nelson had been specially interested.

"I suppose," said Nick, "that you still have your plans of the work done in the Federal Building?"

"Yes, sir, of course," Page nodded. "They are filed with others in the workroom."

"I'd like to see them, Mr. Godbold, if you have no objection," said the detective.

"None, whatever," was the reply. "Bring them, Page, at once."

"If he does," thought Nick, "I shall have shot an arrow very wide of the mark."

He was, in fact, expecting precisely what followed. For the foreman returned in about ten minutes and stated, with manifest consternation, that the desired plans were—missing.

"I am not surprised," said Nick, smiling. "I have reasons for suspecting Nelson of being a crook, but you must not repeat that, nor take any steps in this matter. Do you happen to know, Mr. Page, where Nelson now is employed?"

"Yes, sure," Page quickly nodded. "He went to work about eight months ago for a cabinetmaker, named Joseph Clark, who since has died. Nelson has been running the shop for Clark's widow since then, but he employs no other workman."

"Do you know where the shop is located?" Nick asked.

"Yes. It's in a narrow street almost back of the Federal Building."

"Ah, is that so? You also can tell me, perhaps, where Nelson resides."

"I certainly can," said the foreman, laughing. "He lives with a married couple named Finley, in Harlem. You can find their address in the directory. The man's name is Peter Finley."

"H'm! I guess I've heard of him."

"Quite likely, Mr. Carter," said Page. "He sometimes is called Plugger Finley, and he has a reputation as a gunman. I guess, Mr. Carter, that's about all the information I can give you."

"Don't let that trouble you, Mr. Page," replied Nick, smiling quizzically. "You have, as a matter of fact, given me all the information I require."

CHAPTER VIII.

NICK CARTER'S GAME.

Soon after three o'clock that afternoon, while passing people still paused to gaze at the great Federal Building, while newsboys still were shrieking extras concerning the double crime, while the shocking affair still was the one topic of discussion in all quarters, and the most sanguine mind had neither courage nor audacity to predict retribution for the guilty, despite that Nick Carter was known to be at work on the case—soon after three o'clock that afternoon, an elderly man, having many of the earmarks of a countryman, left Broadway and turned his steps in the direction of the cabinetmaker's shop.

He appeared to be about seventy years old. His hair and beard were gray, his form somewhat bent, and he wore steel-bowed spectacles. In one hand he carried a cane with a bone head; in the other, a valise that was much the worse for wear.

Gazing up at the signs of the buildings while he walked, colliding frequently with passing pedestrians, he presently discovered what he was seeking—the same sign at which Chick Carter had been led to glance the previous Friday night.

The countenance of this elderly looking man quickly lighted. He hurried across the street, dodging back of a passing wagon, and entered the shop of the cabinetmaker.

Only two persons then were there, both in the rear of the deep room.

One of them was working at a bench, engaged in planing the edge of a board screwed in a vice. He was a compact, muscular man of forty, with sandy hair, freckled skin, and narrow, gray eyes. He wore no coat and his shirt sleeves were rolled above his elbows.

His companion, seated on a box near by, and who was very carefully disguised, was—Nate Herrick.

Both men turned quickly when the stranger entered and came toward them, and Herrick whispered half a dozen hurried words to the other.

"Howdy do?" said the man with a valise, which he at the same time placed on the floor. "Ain't the boss around?"

"The boss?" questioned the man with a plane.

"Sartin! The man who runs this 'ere shop."

"I run the shop, sir."

"You do, eh? How long since?" asked the visitor, peering incredulously through his spectacles.

"Something like eight months. My name is Nelson."

"'Tis, eh?"

"Jack Nelson."

"Waal, you ain't the man I'm looking arter. Where'll I find the man whose name's over the door—Joseph Clark? He's the man I'm arter."

Nelson grinned, glancing furtively at Herrick, but there was no sign of a smile on the latter's face.

For the box on which Herrick was seated was a low one, and, gazing up at the stranger, he had caught sight of a lock of dark hair under the lower edge of a gray wig, and then the clean-cut profile of nose and brow struck to his heart like the point of a knife.

"Nick Carter himself, by thunder!" flashed through his mind, scarce half a second before Nelson glanced at him.

Nate Herrick, however, was blessed with nerves of steel. He continued gazing, without the movement of a muscle, and said, after a moment:

"I guess, Jack, the old gentleman has not heard of it."

"Heard of what?"

Nick turned and peered down at him—and recognized him.

"Of the death of Joseph Clark, sir, several months ago," Herrick explained.

"Dead—Joseph dead!" Nick exclaimed, with well-affected surprise and sorrow. "Dear me! 'tain't possible, is it? Waal, waal, this 'ere is suddin' enough."

And Nick drew out a large red handkerchief, while speaking, and then removed his spectacles and wiped a tear from his eye.

Herrick seized this opportunity to give Nelson one swift, significant glance, and the latter winked understandingly.

"Yes, sir, it's more than possible—it's true," said he, addressing Nick. "I've been running the shop since then."

"Waal, waal, I'm sorry to hear it—mighty sorry," Nick

sadly vouchsafed. "We were allus good friends, him and me. Poor Joe!"

"Where do you hail from?" Nelson inquired.

"I come from up State," Nick replied, pretending to compose himself. "Joe's wife, Martha, come from my town, and I never make a trip down to this 'ere Babylon but what I visit them. I writ Martha day before yisterday that I was coming, but—— Waal, waal, I can't seem to realize it! Joseph dead, eh?"

"Sad news for you, sir, to be sure," said Herrick, again slipping in his oar.

"So 'tis, sir, very sad," Nick bowed. "I hardly know what to do. Mebbe you can tell me, Mr. Nelson, whether his widder, Martha, is living in the same old place. I have not been down here for nigh eight years."

"Well, I don't know that she lives where she did then," said Nelson, taking his cue from a gleam in Herrick's eyes. "But I know where she lives, all right."

"Yes, so do I," put in Herrick.

"Could you direct me how to go there?"

"I can do better than that, sir."

"Better?"

"Sure thing," nodded Herrick, rising. "I live only half a block from her, sir, and I had dropped in here to go home with Nelson, when he closes the shop. But I had just as soon go at once, as for that, and show you the way. I'll take you right to the Widow Clark's door."

Nick heard him with brightening countenance.

"Waal, waal, that's mighty good of you, I'm sure," said he. "Won't it be puttin' you to too much trouble?"

"No trouble, whatever," Herrick quickly assured him. "I'd be glad to do so."

Nick had not a doubt of it—and the satisfaction was mutual.

"I reckon, then, I'll take your offer," said he gratefully. "Where is it that Martha lives?"

"She now is living in Harlem."

"That's too fur to walk, ain't it?"

"Well, rather," smiled Herrick. "We'll take a subway train, however, which will drop us within walking distance."

"That's one of them under-the-ground trains, ain't it?"

"Yes, but they're all right."

"I never rid in one. I'll risk it, all the same, if you do."

"Shall we go at once?"

"Sartin," said Nick. "I'm only keeping this 'ere man from his work. Joseph dead! Waal, waal, waal!"

Nick picked up the valise with the last and walked toward the door.

Herrick again whispered a few words to Nelson, then hastened after the detective.

More than half an hour later, during which both craftily played a part well calculated to deceive the other, they might have been seen making their way through one of the lower streets on the Harlem water front, where they presently arrived at an inferior wooden house, at the steps of which Herrick abruptly halted.

"Here is where I live," said he, taking Nick's arm. "Come in for half a minute, while I give my wife directions for supper, and then I'll show you where Mrs. Clark lives. I'll not detain you long."

"Sartin," Nick readily assented. "I'm not in a rush."

Herrick led him up the steps, opening the door with a latchkey, and then conducted Nick into a cheaply furnished front room.

"Sit down," said he, pointing to a chair. "I'll call my wife."

Nick obeyed.

Herrick drew back a few steps, then whistled shrilly and whipped a revolver from his side pocket, aiming it point-blank at the detective's head.

"Now, Carter, don't you stir foot or finger!" he cried, with sudden, terrible ferocity. "If you do, you'll be a dead one the next instant. I've been waiting and watching for this chance, and now, finally—I've got you!"

CHAPTER IX.

THE LAST CALL.

Mingled with Nate Herrick's threatening cries, which were imbued with a vengeful hatred utterly beyond verbal description, came sounds of equally ominous import—the heavy tread of hurrying feet, half-smothered growls and muttered oaths and imprecations, while through an adjoining entry rushed several members of the startled gang—Mauler and Jimmie Daley, the chief cracksmen, Tony Brock and Mike Glidden, all of whom Chick had seen in the cabinetmaker's basement, while Plugger Finley brought up in the rear, gun in hand, and ready for any desperate deed their safety might require.

If Nick Carter felt any dismay when they rushed into the room, where Herrick still covered him with a leveled revolver, the detective did not betray it. He had thrown up both hands, lest the miscreant confronting him might fire, and he now dropped them only enough to deftly whip off his disguise and cast it upon the floor, revealing to one and all his strong, clean-cut face, wearing an expression of contempt and defiance in vivid contrast with the threatening looks and ugly scowls of his half dozen observers.

Nick was the first to speak, moreover, for amazement briefly silenced the startled gang.

"Don't get gay, you fellows," he said coolly. "You won't need those guns. I'm not fool enough to show fight against odds of six to one, to say nothing of six such cutthroats as you. I'm cornered, all right, and will take my medicine."

"You bet you'll take it," cried Herrick exultantly. "Keep your heads, pals, and one of you bring a rope. There is nothing to fear. I've caught him. We've got both of them now, and can wipe out the only two sleuths we have feared. Bring a rope, Plugger, and be quick about it!"

Finley uttered a snarl and rushed out of the room.

"The only two sleuths, eh?" thought Nick. "That sounds good to me. They have got Chick, also, as I suspected, and he is still living. That's what I most hoped to hear."

Though they still surrounded him with ugly frowns and ready weapons, very little was said by the gang until after Finley returned, bringing several pieces of rope with which he and Daley quickly secured Nick's arms behind him.

Their tongues were then loosened, and one and all began to question Herrick as to what had led to this unexpected capture of their most dreaded foe.

"Don't be in a rush," he protested. "I cannot answer a dozen questions at once. There'll be time enough for all, now that we've got him."

"That's right, too," growled Magee.

"Take him to the basement," Herrick commanded. "There'll be no danger, then, of being heard from the street. I can tell you in three minutes what kind of a trick he tried to pull off, and how I turned the tables on him. We've got him foul, all right. Bring him to the basement."

The miscreant led the way while speaking, and his hearers needed no second bidding. Two of them seized Nick's arms and forced him to follow, conducting him through the entry and down a flight of bare stairs, then into a basement dining room where, with a feeling of genuine satisfaction, Nick beheld his missing assistant bound hand and foot to a stout oak chair in one corner. Though his face was a bit haggard, he did not look seriously the worse for his recent experiences.

Having heard the disturbance overhead, Chick already knew that something unusual had happened, and he had begun to suspect that Nick also had been taken. He was not much surprised, therefore, when the latter was led into the room.

"Ah! they've got you, then, also," he cried, meeting Nick's gaze.

"Yes, as you see. I had an idea that you were in their clutches," replied Nick, and a momentary gleam in his eyes told Chick something more than then appeared on the surface.

As a matter of fact, Chick had been in utter ignorance as to his whereabouts since the previous Friday night. Removed from Clark's shop by the gang, after they had nailed him in a large box precluding any view outside, he had been taken to Plugger Finley's house in Harlem, where he since had been a prisoner in charge of Finley's wife and Nell Garside, both of whom then were in the room.

Chick knew, however, that a big robbery had been committed. He had heard the gang arrive there early Sunday morning, and their exultant looks and remarks occasionally dropped, told the story. He had heard them digging in the cellar, moreover, and knew that their plunder was being temporarily concealed.

That the gang now were reassured and believed things to be coming their way was apparent in the faces of all, Herrick having hurriedly given them a hint at what had occurred in Nelson's shop, as well as how he had, or so he really thought, completely duped the famous detective.

He had thrown himself upon a chair near the table, directly opposite that which Nick had been forced to take, while the two women drew back in one corner and the five other crooks stood lounging against the walls on either side, their glances now turned upon Herrick, and now upon the two detectives who, they had not a doubt, were helplessly in their power.

"That's how I got him, pals," declared Herrick, ending an explanation he had been making to Finley and Magee. "He was out to trick Nelson in some way, but I happened to be there and tricked him, instead."

"But what took him to Nelson's shop?" Magee questioned doubtfully. "How did he get a line on him?"

"Rats!" Herrick blurted, glancing at Nick's impassive face. "That's plain enough, Magee. He knew the job must have been done from the rear, and he got wise to the fact that the false partition must have been built by a cabinetmaker. He went nosing into Nelson's shop, therefore, to see what he could learn. He hoped to find, no doubt, shavings or bits of wood like that used for the partition. I foresaw that, all right, and had all the refuse cleaned out."

"I see," said Magee. "That may be right."

"Sure it's right," Herrick insisted confidently. "What other motive could he have had? There's no evidence against Nelson."

"Not a bit, Nate," put in Finley. "You're right, as far as that goes."

"Oh, I have the whole business sized up correctly," said Herrick. "The instant I recognized him, too, I saw how I could trap him. He went into it like a fish into a net. Didn't you, Carter?"

Nick had been listening without interrupting, and with hardly a change of countenance, and his look of grim defiance seemed to confirm Herrick's exultant assertion.

"Yes, I suppose I did, Herrick," Nick now admitted, a bit sullenly, "since I'm here and in the clutches of you rascals."

"That's just what you did, Carter, for once in your life," Herrick nodded, with a triumphant grin. "But I warned you of it. I wrote you after escaping from Bridgeport with Nell, here, that I would surely get you. I have made good, all right, and this is your last call."

"My last call, eh?" questioned Nick.

"That's what—your last call," Herrick forcibly declared. "You will answer to it with your life. You have beaten me out twice, Carter, in games of this kind, but this one will witness your finish—not mine."

Nick Carter was not in a mood to banter needless words with such a bunch of blacklegs. He knew precisely of what they were guilty, and precisely how their knavish work had been done. He was convinced that he had the entire case down pat.

Nick saw before him the entire gang, moreover, with one exception—the crook cabinetmaker, whose subsequent arrest could easily be insured.

He saw, too, which impressed him most of all, the worst pair of crooks then at large, Nell Garside and Nate Herrick, the railway wrecker, the notorious chief of the auto bandits, the more recent leader of this gang of burglars, a miscreant whose capacity for knavery made him a public menace as long as he lived. Nick had no fancy for needless words with such rascals.

He drew up a little in his chair, while his face took on a more austere expression, his voice a subtle, threatening ring.

"I think it is highly probable, Herrick," said he deliberately, "that this will be the last call—for one of us."

"One of us, eh?" cried Herrick, sneering.

"Yes."

"Have you any doubt which one?"

"No."

"I should say not! Your finish is as sure——"

"Stop a moment," Nick interrupted. "You are viewing this situation from your standpoint only. Hasn't it occurred to you that you may have overlooked something?"

"Not much!" snapped Herrick, though his face paled perceptibly. "You can't fool me, Carter."

"You are mistaken, Herrick."

"Mistaken?"

"I already have fooled you," said Nick coldly.

"Fooled me!" Herrick lurched forward in his chair, scowling fiercely. "What do you mean by that? Tell me what you mean."

Magee, Finley, every man of the gang, in fact, then was

on his nerve. Each felt instinctively that something was wrong, that their leader had thrown a shoe.

Nick observed it and hastened the climax of his masterly move.

"I'll tell you what I mean, Herrick," he said sternly. "I never am so lame as to disguise myself in a way permitting crooks to recognize me—unless I wish it. I knew that Nelson, even if I had found him alone in his shop, would know me and consent to guide me, not to the home of Clark's widow—but into the hands of this gang. You did it for him, Herrick. But don't imagine that I have come here, Herrick, without being trailed by—one of my assistants! Do you doubt that?"

Nick ended the question with a whistle that rang with the shrillness of a caliope through the house.

It was echoed by shouts and yells from outside.

Then came the crash of falling doors, the rending of window sashes and splintered glass, the fierce fall of feet in the entries and on the stairs, and a score of policemen and plain-clothes men from the precinct station came surging toward the dining room.

The gang knew what it meant—that Herrick had failed, and Nick Carter made good.

Some of them tried to escape, only to be gathered in by the horde of officers whom Patsy Garvan had, after shadowing Nick to the house, hurriedly summoned.

Only one man of the gang drew a weapon and used it. With a single vengeful cry, with face gone ghastly white when he heard the rush of feet in the entry, Herrick bounded from his chair and drew his revolver, sending a bullet at Nick Carter's head.

As quick as a flash, Nick threw himself sideways to the floor, and the bullet buried itself in the plastered wall.

Herrick leaped around the table and would have fired again—but the crash of Patsy Garvan's revolver, as he plunged into the room, prevented him.

Patsy meant business and did not fire in vain. For Nate Herrick threw both hands into the air, uttered one wild cry, and then pitched face forward to the floor, shot through the head.

As Nick had predicted for one of them, this was, indeed—The Last Call.

In other respects, the wholesale arrest was quickly made and without much bloodshed. Within an hour the rest of the gang, including Jack Nelson, were securely lodged in the Tombs.

Nate Herrick then was stretched upon a marble slab in the morgue.

The plunder from the Federal Bank was found in Plugger Finley's cellar. Before six o'clock that afternoon it was restored to its rightful owners, and extra editions of every New York newspaper were extolling the wonderful work done by Nick Carter. It was, indeed, wonderful, for less than twelve hours had passed since the double crime was discovered.

Nick accepted these honors with customary modesty, however, and had the satisfaction a month later of seeing all of the gang convicted and sentenced for their crimes. None escaped the penalty this time—save one.

Nate Herrick was tried and sentenced at—The Higher Tribunal.

THE END.

More about the Dantons, who were introduced to our readers in a recent number of this weekly, will be found in the next issue, No. 64, out November 29th, in the story entitled "Mercedes Danton's Double; or, A Plot for Many Millions." The story tells how a well-organized attempt was made to wipe out the Dantons and obtain their huge fortune, and how Nick Carter thwarted it.

THE HEAD-HUNTER;

Or, Steve Manley's Secret Mission.

By ALDEN F. BRADSHAW.

CHAPTER I.

A MYSTERIOUS CRIME.

"Haul that infernal trunk out of the way, one of you lubbers! What's it doing there, anyhow?"

"I dunno, sir!"

"Whose is it?"

"Couldn't tell yer, sir."

"Don't any of you know where it came from?"

"I don't, cap'n."

"Nuther do I."

"'Twas here first thing this morning, sir. I was sittin' on it afore daybreak."

"Yes, and you've all had a whack at sitting on it. You're better sitters, to a man, than you are workers. Lay hold, there, two of you, and run it out back. It's in the way."

This interchange of words occurred early one recent morning on one of the river landings in the city of Pennville, and within a half mile of what is known as the Point.

The man, evidently in authority, whose gruff words had been addressed to a halfscore of the rough-looking laborers who hang about the river front in search of employment, was a burly, middle-aged man named Luscom, and was master of the lighter or barge which was then hauled up at the landing to be unladen.

The object which had occasioned his noisy disapproval was merely an old trunk of moderate size, tied with a rope, and which plainly was in the way of the work of unloading soon to be begun.

In response to Luscom's command two of the men seized hold of the trunk at either end to remove it back upon the landing and out of the way.

Before it could be raised, however, one of the men started up with a sudden cry of alarm.

"There's something wrong here!"

"What do you say?" yelled Luscom from the barge.

"The bottom's covered with blood! Look at me hands"

And the man, with dismay and aversion pictured in his rough face, held out both of his hands to be seen.

Both palms, where he had seized hold of the bottom of the trunk, were stained red with half-congealed blood.

Luscom sprang down from the rail of the barge and hurriedly joined the gang of men who quickly had gathered nearer the doubtful object.

Consternation and misgivings were portrayed in every face.

Angry words had been turned to gruesome interest, and the strange trunk now was endowed with all the qualities of sudden and startling mystery.

"See if there is any name on it" cried Luscom, as he approached.

"I don't find any."

"No card or tag?"

"Divil a card or tag."

"Pull off the rope and open her up," suggested one of the men.

"That's the stuff!" cried another. "Mebbe there has been a murder committed."

"If there has, you guys ain't the parties to meddle with the trunk. Let it alone, and send for the chief of detectives."

All hands turned quickly to look at the person who had so curtly put in his oar, and beheld a youngster with sharp, blue eyes and a very bright and determined face for one of his years.

It was Steve Manley, the boy member of Chief O'Mara's force of local detectives.

He had seen the gang gathered about the trunk, and ran down from the street to learn the occasion.

None of the men knew him by sight, however, and one bluntly demanded:

"Who in thunder are you?"

"What's the odds who I am?" retorted Steve. "I know what I'm talking about."

"Do you know anything about this trunk?" asked Luscom suspiciously.

"I know only what I see, and if there is anything wrong with it you'd better let it stand where it is," said Steve decidedly.

"I guess the boy's right," said Luscom. "Here, Malloy, run up to the office and tell the clerk to telephone the police."

The man addressed hastened up the landing and vanished into the office of the storage building.

Steve Manley waited about without disclosing his connection with the police department, yet kept an eye on the mysterious trunk to make sure it was not further disturbed.

None of the men now seemed inclined to handle the dismal object, however, and at the end of a quarter hour, Inspector Garrity was seen hurrying down the landing.

As he approached, he caught sight of Steve, but the latter at once made a secret sign to him that he did not wish to be recognized.

Garrity, who was a great friend of Steve, winked understandingly, and at once addressed Luscom, who had been impatiently waiting his arrival.

"What's the trouble here?"

"Ain't sure that there is any," rejoined Luscom shortly; "but the bottom of this trunk is covered with blood, so I sent for the police."

"Quite right! Here, one of you men, pull off that rope."

"I'll do it, sir."

"Don't cut it! Here, wait a bit till I examine that knot."

"It's a half hitch!" cried Luscom. "And this here, where the line's made fast, is a flat fishhook knot. Looks like the thing was tied up by a sailor."

"That was my idea," nodded Garrity. "Now loose it."

It took but a few minutes to cast off the line.

Then Garrity snapped the hasps of the trunk and threw back the cover.

The first thing to meet the gaze of the group of anxious observers was an old oilcloth, which had been doubled up and laid over the contents of the trunk.

The detective seized it by one corner and threw it out upon the ground.

As the interior of the trunk was disclosed a cry of amazement and dismay broke from the lips of all.

"By thunder! It's a case of murder!" cried Luscom.

"Nothing less than that!" muttered Garrity ominously.

Beneath the oilcloth, crowded and doubled into the trunk, was the body of a man clad in a cheap gray suit now shockingly stained with blood.

But there was one feature which startled all the most, and brought an involuntary cry even from the detective, accustomed though he was to strange and terrible discoveries.

"Good God!" he exclaimed. "The man's head is missing!"

"Isn't it in the trunk?" gasped Luscom, horrified by the sight.

"You may see for yourself."

"I've no wish to see more."

"Lay hold here, two of you men," cried Garrity; "and place the body upon the ground."

"Shure, I'll not lay a finger to it," protested one, shrinking back among his companions.

At this, and seeing the aversion with which the gang of men received the detective's command, Luscom turned toward the barge and bawled lustily:

"Here, you, Madok, come ashore and lend a hand! Here is a fellow who will do the job for you, officer."

The man to whom Luscom had called stood gazing over the rail of the barge, from which he had been intently viewing the entire scene described.

On hearing the command, he cleared with a single broad leap the span from the barge to the landing, a distance of fully ten feet and strode rapidly toward the group of men.

His appearance was startling. He was more than six feet tall, and as black as a negro, yet his features were not those of the African race. His hair was straight and quite long, his head and feet were bare, and he was clad only in trousers and a blue woolen shirt, the open front of which revealed the huge muscles of his broad black breast.

Though evidently a man of forty years or thereabouts, his step was quick and elastic, his brawny arms like those of a giant, and his powerful figure as erect as an arrow.

Even Garrity was startled by the man's striking aspect.

"Who is this fellow?" he demanded of Luscom, in a low voice.

"He is a Malay, and has been at work for me on the barge for a month or more," replied Luscom, as the man approached.

"He should be able to earn his pay."

"Yes; and he is as powerful as he looks," nodded Luscom. "Lay hold of that body, Madok, and place it upon the ground."

Luscom also indicated with gestures the nature of his command, much as if the other was not familiar with the English tongue; and the Malay, with absolute indifference to the ghastly object in the trunk, instantly stooped and raised the decapitated body and laid it upon the ground near by.

Despite that the victim of the tragedy was of considerable size, the Malay accomplished the feat with such apparent ease that Garrity again stared at his Herculean figure and wondered at the fellow's mighty strength.

The moment the body was removed one of the workmen cried excitedly:

"Sure, officer, I know this man. Look at the foot on him."

Steve Manley worked his way through the crowd and stared down at the member at which the speaker was pointing.

There was rather the absence of the extremity mentioned. Instead of having a foot, the left leg of the dead man had been amputated below the knee, and only a round wooden peg about two inches in diameter protruded from the bottom of the dead man's trousers.

"Who is the man?" Garrity instantly demanded.

"I dunno his name, sir, but I've seen him stumping about the landings along the river here for many a day."

"Do you know where he lived?"

"I think he lived up in Leary's place."

"Leary's boarding house?"

"Shure, sir; that's the one I mean," nodded the informant. "I've seen him sitting outside the door up there many a time."

"Go up there at once and bring Leary down here," commanded the detective. "Tell him that Garrity, of the police department, wants him."

"D'ye think that'll bring him, sir?"

"I don't think; I know it will."

As the man started off to obey, Garrity turned and beckoned Steve to his side and said softly:

"What have you discovered?"

"I'm not onto anything yet, sir," replied Steve, in a whisper.

"Yet you did not want me to recognize you."

"What would have been the good of it? I might tumble to something, and 'twould be just as well if no one was on."

"What were you doing down in this locality?"

"I was piping off a junk man for the chief, who suspected him of swiping lead pipe," explained Steve. "When I saw the gang around the trunk, I chased meself down here to see what was up."

"Do you know if they have a telephone over in the office yonder?"

"Sure, they have."

"Slip up there, then, and telephone to the chief. He was not in the office when I came away, but should have arrived by this time. Tell him what has occurred, and ask him to come down here."

"Der case has a wicked look, d'ye think?"

"Very," nodded Garrity. "And the chief will want to investigate it in person. I'll look after things here while you go and inform him."

Steve winked understandingly, and hastened up the landing toward the storage-house office, leaving the group of men still surrounding the gruesome discovery made that early morning, the least affected and most imposing of whom was the savage-looking Malay, whose grim and uncouth figure towered like that of a giant over those near him.

CHAPTER II.

THE IRISHMAN'S STORY.

"Tip the trunk up on end. I wish to see the bottom of it."

This was the first command of Chief O'Mara, after he had arrived on the scene and learned the few details imparted by Garrity.

One of the workmen hastened to obey, and the chief quickly ordered all others to stand back from the immediate scene of his investigation.

It was less than a half hour since the crime was discovered. The body of the man lay on the ground, but now was covered with the piece of oilcloth, hiding the dismal remains from morbidly curious eyes.

The news of the startling crime had spread rapidly, and at the head of the landing a great crowd of people had collected; but three policemen now were stationed there and prevented them from coming nearer. Other than those already on the spot, only additional detectives and the local reporters were allowed to approach.

It took the chief but a few moments to make his examination of the trunk. It was one of the cheapest sort, made of wood and covered with sheet tin, painted green, and was very much worn and soiled.

"It is evidently a back number," he said, addressing the several detectives gathered near. "It looks as if it had been discarded, and had been lying out in some dump heap."

"The dirt on it may have been collected in bringing it here," suggested Garrity.

"Possibly," nodded the chief. "It is quite an important question, however, as it may indicate whether the crime was committed in a house or out of doors. Notice that there are several small cobwebs next to these slats which run across the bottom."

"As if the trunk had been standing, unmoved, on a floor for some time?"

"Precisely. Notice, also, on the back edge of the cover these marks of white."

"What do you make of those, sir?"

"The trunk evidently has stood next to a whitewashed wall," explained the chief. "And when the lid was lifted, the back edge of it evidently scraped the wall in places, removing some of the lime. Note that for a clew. We must discover where the trunk came from."

"I have noted the fact, sir."

"What is that oilcloth?"

"It is an old, enameled table cover."

"Wait a bit! Have you got a rule?"

"Here is one, sir!" cried Luscom, venturing to approach.

Chief O'Mara took it and passed it to Garrity, then waved the bargeman back from where he had come.

"Measure that bend in the edge of the cloth in both directions, Garrity," he commanded. "That will give us the size of the table on which it has been laid. Stand back, there, all of you people!" he added sharply to the crowd. "When I have anything for your ears I'll tell you so."

Garrity quickly made the measurements desired, and noted them upon paper.

"We may be able to locate the table from which the cloth was removed, though there doubtless are many of the same size," added Chief O'Mara. "Still, if we can find such a table occupying a whitewashed room, the wall of which has been marred by the opening of a trunk, the combination of circumstances will be worth considering."

"I should say so, chief."

"Start off a half dozen detectives at once on this search," continued the chief softly. "Instruct them to visit all the

tenements and doubtful houses in this locality, and those round about Leary's place, where this fellow is said to have resided. Set Steve Manley upon the work along with the others. Let it be done at once, and without too much publicity."

Garrity immediately turned to the waiting detectives and gave them the instructions; and Steve, along with the others, hurriedly departed from the landing.

Meantime the chief turned his investigation in a new direction.

"When was this trunk brought here, Watson?" he demanded, addressing the manager of the landing and the storage house adjoining, who had just come down from the office.

"I cannot tell you, Chief O'Mara," was the reply. "I know nothing about it."

"Who is the master of this barge?"

"I am, sir," said Luscom.

"When did you haul up here?"

"Yesterday morning."

"How many men have you aboard?"

"Three, sir; this Malay, here, and two others."

"Were you about here all of yesterday?"

"Either myself or my men."

"Then some of you must know if the trunk was here yesterday."

"It was not," said Luscom promptly. "I saw it for the first time this morning. It was not here at dark last night."

"Watson, is there a watchman here nights?"

"No, sir; we don't keep one. The gates yonder are closed at night."

"Who was aboard the barge during last night?"

"Only Madok, this man here," replied Luscom, pointing to the Malay.

Chief O'Mara turned quickly in his direction, and said sharply:

"What do you know about the trunk? Anything?"

The Malay looked a little doubtful for a moment, then drew up his huge figure and showed two glittering rows of white teeth with a grin.

"Me no tell!" he exclaimed, with a voice as deep and sonorous as distant thunder.

"You will not tell?" cried the chief, with a quick frown of displeasure.

"He means that he cannot tell, sir," interposed Luscom, hastening to explain. "The nigger don't understand English very well."

"Ah, that's different!"

"I think you can make him understand what you want, however."

The chief tried again. Pointing to the trunk, he asked more slowly:

"Do you know when that was left here?"

The Malay grinned again, and now shook his head.

"Me no tell," he repeated. "Me sleep."

"He means he was asleep when it was left here," explained Luscom.

"Who was aboard the barge with him last night?"

"He was alone. The other two men were at the hotel with me."

"What time did you go to sleep?" demanded the chief, turning to the Malay.

The latter raised his brawny arm and pointed to the western sky.

"Moon there," he said shortly.

"Ah, he means that the moon was setting!" exclaimed Chief O'Mara. "Then it must have been nearly two in the morning."

"Yes, two!" cried the Malay, quickly holding up two fingers. "Hear bells two."

"He means," interposed Luscom, "that he heard one of the church clocks strike two."

"I understand," nodded the chief. "Was the trunk then here?"

"No here then!"

"It must have been brought later than two o'clock, then, and after this fellow went to bed."

"It was here at four o'clock, sur, I'll swear to that!" cried one of the gang of men, who was within hearing of what had been said.

"Were you here at four?" demanded Chief O'Mara, turning in his direction.

"I was that; and me friend, Ferguson, here'll, bear witness."

"What were you doing about here at that early hour?"

"Shure, we knew the barge was to be unloaded, and were rowed up from below in the skiff tied yonder, hoping to get a job by being here first."

"That's right!" cried the Malay, whose intensely black eyes had been flashing with restless interest between the several speakers. "Me see them sette on box when me get up!"

And he now pointed to the trunk, as meaning the box mentioned.

"We were waiting about here from four o'clock until six," added the laborer; "and then the gates, yonder, were opened and bargemen came down."

"Evidently, then, the trunk was brought here between two and four this morning," said Chief O'Mara, turning to Garrity. "Call Leary this way, that I may learn what he knows about the victim of the affair."

In response to the detective's summons, there advanced from among the crowd a short, red-faced Irishman, whose crafty, gray eyes, and expression of distrust rather belied the readiness with which he approached.

"Have you seen this body, Leary?" demanded Chief O'Mara, with a sharp scrutiny of the man's face.

For Tim Leary's place near River Street bore about as tough a reputation as any in the city, and the fact that Leary knew anything at all about the man and the affair was quite enough to warrant suspicion.

"Yis, sur, I was afther seeing it before 'twas covered up," he replied, jerking out the words with some rapidity.

"Can you identify it?"

"Aisy, sur; by the fut that's missing."

"Who is the man?"

"His name's Hogan, sur."

"What do you know about him?"

"Divil a thing do I know about him, sur, save he came to me house to live more'n three months back."

"Of course you know where he came from?"

"Shure, sur, I don't," protested Leary, evidently not liking the chief's sharp tone. "I only know phat he was afther telling me."

"What was that?"

"'Twas as how he'd been masther of a vessel phat wint to Chiny, where tay cames from, and to all the furren countries on the bottom side o' the worruld. He said as how

he was afther losing his fut on his last trip, and gave up going to say fur good and fur all."

"Was he a man of means?"

"Shure, sur, he niver told me phat he had. He paid his board ivery wake, and that's all I was afther wanting."

"Did he pay you with a check or with cash?"

"With the reddy money, sur."

"Was he in the habit of receiving friends?"

"Phat came to me house to see him, do yer mean?"

"Yes."

"Divil a friend do I think he was afther having in all the worruld."

"Why so?"

"Shure, no wan iver came to see him, and he niver had no letthers, and he was as odd as a stick as the bit o' timber he stumped round the house on, making as much noise as a man driving nails with a hammer."

"You mean that he was eccentric?"

"Bedad, I don't know if he had that disease or not."

"You said he was an odd stick."

"That's phat I said."

"Well, that means the same as eccentric," growled Chief O'Mara impatiently. "Was he a drinking man?"

"In a mild way, sur."

"Did you ever see him drunk?"

"Only wance, sur."

"When was that?"

"Only a month back, sur."

"Do you know when he was last seen alive?"

"Shure, how w'u'd I know!" cried Leary. "The last I seen of him, he was pegging off down the street yesterday morning, not fur from noon. He didn't come back to his dinner or supper, and the next I knew was when I saw him here with his knob gone."

"What was his first name?"

"Bin, sur. He was called Cap'n Bin Hogan."

"Captain Ben Hogan," echoed the chief, glancing again toward the dismal object on the ground. "Do you, Leary, know anything further about this affair?"

"No, sur, I don't!" cried Leary, again resenting the chief's tone. "I'm afther telling you all I know about it."

Yet a vague, fleeting expression in the crafty gray eyes of the Irishman led Chief O'Mara to suspect that he was not telling the whole truth.

TO BE CONTINUED.

A TRAIN STOPPED BY A MOUSE.

On the Italian railways an electrical apparatus, upon the departure of a train from any station, rings six strokes upon a gong in the next station. The station master at Capri, hearing three strokes when there should have been six, immediately came to the conclusion that there was something wrong on the line, and ordered up the electric signals of warning. The train, which was by this time under full headway, came to a dead stop.

Then began a transfer of telegraphic messages. The passengers were anxious to know what was the matter. They waited while the messages went back and forth. The inquiry established the fact that everything was right on the line, and the train was ordered forward after considerable delay.

The station master about this time thought it might be well to look into his gong, and there he found, stuck fast between the cogs of the electrical apparatus, a mouse.

The unhappy animal happened to be in the interior of the clock when it "struck one," and down he attempted to run, but was caught between the murderous wheels. His little body was big enough to stop the whole apparatus, and consequently the train as well.

OLD JOHN'S BEAR STORY.

By ROWLAND ROBERTS.

Several years ago a company of us started on a hunting expedition to the Rocky Mountains.

Our party consisted of only three persons, but we got an old trapper to accompany us, who knew all about the mountains. We then consisted of William Walker, John Conard, myself, and the old trapper.

The old trapper's name was John. We could not get him to tell us his last name. We always called him "Old John, the Trapper."

He was famous for telling his adventures to us, and this narrative is one of them, which he related to us around the camp fire. I will tell it in his own words, as near as I can remember:

"It's six years ago this last winter that I wur at the head waters of the Platte River. It wur on the southern fork. There wur a party of six of us in all, an' we wur on a reg'lar huntin' and trappin' expedition.

"Ye will understand that we were clost to the Rocky Mountains; the snow wur deep in most places, an' the ground wur froze perty deep. But we had a good camp, snug and warm as a city house, plenty of ammunition, and, of course, we didn't want for provisions.

"One day I started out all alone, more for the sake of doin' something to pass away time than anything else. It wur the day after we come in from a long hunt, and we wur in for a resting spell. I took a turn along by the bank of a small creek, an' hadn't gone more than half a mile afore I struck a deer track.

"We hadn't seed a deer for a long time, an', ye may be sure, I wur sort of anxiouslike to carry this chap to the camp. From the track, I knowed it wur a large one, and that it hadn't been a long time gone.

"So I looked to my rifle; 'twas the same ole iron I've got hyer. I looked at it to be sure 'twas all right for a moment's call, an' then started on. I followed the track about half a mile farther, which brought me to the foot of a mighty big rock. I went around this yer, and beyant wur a sort of flat ledge, where the snow had all blowed off, an' left it as bare as a baby's face. Over these rocks I crawled, for I could find the track in the crevices, whur the deer had put his foot, ye see. I tell ye it came pretty nigh being a pity that I couldn't put my foot in, too.

"However, I cum to the fair snow once more, and afore long I found a place whur I fancied I'd got the feller safe enough. It wur a deep gut, and in one place a sort of bluff made out from the side of it.

"I went in, an' tracked the deer clean to the farder end.

"Now, ef I'd only crossed over onto the other side, I mout have seed the deer had gone out again, an' gone out mighty quick, too, with something after him. But I didn't go over thur, an' so I didn't see them.

"When I cum to this bluff that made out from the side of the gut or gully, I found the deer had struck across with a kind of leap. At first I lost the track, and wur jest a-goin' to wonder if the feller had gone right down into the frozen ground, when I seed his next track clean off to the left, some fifteen feet distant. In course I knowed that something had skeered him, but I didn't stop to consider about it. As I said, I follered the track, but not wholly across. I were purty nigh onto halfway across, when I heerd a sound behind me that made me jump. I turned, and there were three grizzlies. They wur a-comin' toward me glibly enough, I tell you—they wur a snuffing up the air, an' I knowed they wur a-smellin' me, just as I seed Bill smell his hot rum and sugar this morning. I smelt jest as good to 'em. The b'ars wur clost upon me, an' I knew as running would be jest as bad as standing still. A grizzly can run right smart—no human can git out of their way on clean ground. I thought of this yer, an' knowed that it wur no use to think of startin' for any assistance. Thar wur some cedar trees in the gut; the piece of timber nighest to me wur a tall, big one, an' it so happened that one of the branches had at some time been lopped off by the snow, an' hung so I could reach it; I made a leap, cotched the limb, and wur just a-swinging myself up, as the headmost b'ar made a snap, an' nabbed my rifle. In course he took it out of my hands jest as easy as nuthin', but he missed me—I wur out of the way quick, I tell ye. I wur rayther dubersome at first that the limb mout break off, as I told ye it was already lopped by the snow that had lodged on it at some time, but it held me, an' up I went out of the way of the b'ars. About twenty feet from the ground the first rale good stout limb growed out, an' onto that I sot myself; an' then looked down at the savage varmints. In course, ye know that the grizzly can't climb trees like the black b'ars. He's got claws long enough; he's got jest the longest, most onconsarned claws of any varmint that runs wild, but he don't know nothing 'bout hugging; he never claps his arms around anything like the black varmint does; so ye see he never goes up a tree.

"Perhaps ye fancy I wur safe up thar. Waal, perhaps I wur, but I rayther fancy you wouldn't have felt very glib ef ye had been in my place. I knowed enough about the grizzly to assure myself that they wouldn't be likely to leave me while ther wur hopes of gitting a taste of my meat. The ground wur so hard and frozen that they couldn't dig up the roots, an' the only living they could get wur the berries that hung from some of the bushes, and once in a while they mout cotch a deer or something of that kind. I seed from their looks that they wur half starved, an' I rayther concluded that they might watch a spell afore they left, and I rayther fancied that their nest wur somewhar about the bluff I told you of.

"It wur now toward the middle of the arternoon, an' I knowed that the varmints wouldn't leave afore dark, if they did then. They wur all three setting on their haunches a-lookin' at me; an' every once in a while they give a grunt an' a growl, for they war mad, an' no mistake. Ef my companions should miss me, and start out, they wouldn't come afore dark, so thar wasn't much use in hollerin', yet I hollered some.

"By'm by the sun went down, an' the wind blowed harder than afore. It wur freezin' cold anywhar 'bout them trappin's, but up in that tree it wur a leetle colder than 'twas anywhar else. I should have froze if I hadn't kept hoppin' up an' thrashin' my hands. I hadn't any mittins, but when I wasn't a-slappin' my hands I kept 'em under my shirt.

"I had hoped that the b'ars would cl'ar out when it come dark; but they didn't have any such notion. Thar they sot like detarmined varmints, as they wur, a-waitin' for their supper. Sometimes they'd start up and walk round a bit, and give a few growls, an' then come back and sit down.

"'Bout nine or ten o'clock two of 'em got up an' went off. I wur kind of hopesome fur a few minutes, for I thought the other one mout not fancy being left alone. But it wur not so; he stuck to his post, an' somewhar arter midnight the other two come back and fetched two more with 'em. The stars wur all out, an' I could see things on the snow purty plain. Now, them two varmints had been an' called their companions; an' I suppose they fancied thar might be more chance of getting me if they had more. I tell ye humans aren't the only critters that can reason. Them b'ars reasoned then—they left one fur a sentry over me while they went fur help; only they showed their ignorance in thinkin' that five of 'em could get me down off the tree when three of 'em couldn't.

"That night wur a long one, too. I kept up a-hollerin' every few minutes, for I fancied my companions mout come out after me, seeing as I didn't come back at dark. But nobody came; I had hollered till I wur hoarse as a sick b'ar, an' I rayther thought I mout be catchin' cold, too. I would have given all I had if I could only have had my rifle. Thar it lay, right under me, and part of the time one of the b'ars wur a-settin' on it. I had powder an' lead enough, but no shootin' iron.

"'Oh, if I only had my rifle!' I kept a-saying that over to myself. But what was the use? I hadn't got it, and what wur more, I couldn't go down to whar it was without being made b'ar breakfast of. The varmints had been without supper, and I knowed their appetites must be kind of sharp for breakfast.

"The morning had come, an' the sun wur up; I commenced to holler again, and I wondered why some of my companions didn't come. I fancied they could find my tracks easy enough, only over the rocky ledge I told you of. But even if they came that way they could certainly hear my voice. By'm by I looked for the tracks I had made the night before, and I couldn't find only a few clost to the bluffs. The wind in the night had blowed 'em all full, and piled the snow over 'em.

"Here wur a fix, and no mistake; my friends mout not find me at all. 'Bout an' hour arter sunrise three of the b'ars went off an' wur gone two hours, an' then come back. I knowed there wur a plot to keep me treed till I had to come down. It war a very unpleasant thought for me jest then. I wur cold and numb, an' my teeth were a-chatterin' like a dozen goats on the ice. In course I couldn't find much exercise on that limb, and I began to have a fear that I mout freeze to death. If my tracks had been all covered up I mout not be found in a long time, for we had none of us ever come that way before.

"It got to be noon, an' all five of the b'ars was under my roost. They wur a growlin' part of the time, and once in a while one or two of 'em would come up and bite at the tree. They was a-gettin' as savage as could be, an' wanted a human to eat. As I said before, the snow

an' ice had shut up most of their food, an' such a chance as they had then they weren't very anxious to lose. One of the b'ars—the biggest one of the lot—come and stood up agin' the tree half a dozen times. He'd stand up thar and snap his teeth at me as though he almost tasted my meat. I wur now weak an' faint; I wur hungry; I wur cold; I wur stiff with roostin' on that limb, and my hands wur losin' thar strength.

"I mout starve thar, and then the b'ars would pick my bones. I hollered with all my might; I yelled out until my voice failed me, and yet no help come! What could I do; I should soon be past doin' anything, save tumblin' down into the jaws of the frightful monsters that waited for me; an' I tried to holler ag'in, but my voice wur gone.

"It wur now nigh onto the middle o' the afternoon, an' no help. I wur 'most gone; my head had grown dizzy, and part o' the time thar seemed to be little, sharp, bright, icy stars dancin' afore my eyes. I knowed I wur a-goin'. I remembered that thar wur a God abuv me, an' I asked Him to help me. I wonder ef what my mother used to tell me in my youth wur truth? I'd never been a wicked man, an' I didn't feel dubersome at all in askin' Him as made me for help.

"Companions, that wur a strange thought of mine. Can't say that God heard me, though; I love to think He did. It kind o' does me good in my old age, when my hair is growin' gray, to think thar's a Being up in the world of sun and stars that'll one day take us unto Himself.

"Howsumever, when I prayed I looked up, an' as I looked up I seed a long strip of bark that had been peeled down. It hung over my head, an' looked as though the lightnin' had done it. The thought struck me that I must get my rifle.

"This yere new hope give me strength. I got up onto my feet, an' reached up. I pulled the strip down, an' it peeled off a piece nigh onto fifteen feet long. I kalkilated a spell, an' then set to work. I was all life now. Oh, I can't begin to tell ye how the blood started through my body. It wur as though I had come to life after bein' dead.

"Onto one end of this strip I fixed my belt. Ye see, I allers carried a few bits o' leather strings in my pockets in case of need. On the buckle end of the belt I fixed a slipping noose, an' the other end wur tied to the strip of bark. I had a muffler about my neck, an' a stout cord to my powder horn, n' I knowed that would reach the ground. I let it down keerfully, and the b'ars at first kind o' moved back. They wur afraid it wur some deathly contrivance. The rifle lay on the snow, with the butt toward me, an' as the lock rested on a lump, made by one o' the roots of the tree, the butt wur up clear so I could slip the belt under it. It went under the first time tryin', an' I had no trouble in drawin' it up to the small part of the butt. Here I drawed it tight; I drawed it keerful, now, I tell ye, and then lifted. The rifle come up; it wur clear o' the snow; when one o' the b'ars made a jump for it, but he missed it. I drawed—drawed—and the old shootin' iron wur mine. I wur weak now from tremblin' so much—tremblin' into clear hope. But I didn't rest long; I put a new cap onto the nipple, and then brought the old thing to my shoulder. One of the b'ars was just standin' up agin' the tree; I drew a sight upon his eye and fired. He fell over backward, and kicked till he was dead.

"I loaded ag'in, an' another of the b'ars rolled over. Ye see, I had a good shot at 'em as they turned their faces toward me. The grizzly's eye is a tender spot; it opens into his brain pan, and an ounce bullet is sure death in thar.

"I had killed four of the b'ars, an' the fifth one kind o' seemed inclined to back out; but he did not do it; he smelled of his dead companions, an' finally looked up at me. That yer look wur his death warrant. My rifle wur at my shoulder, an' the moment he turned up, I fired. It wur a good shot.

"When I came down out of that tree, I was a happy, thankful man. I looked up once more to the same place as I had looked when I asked for help; and this time I give God my thanks. Ef they wasn't very well put together, they wur sincere. I took a look at the dead b'ars, and then started for the camp.

"I found my companions had just come in from a long hunt after me; they had lost my track, as I thought, and wur just about ready to give me up as a lost human. They went out with the horses, and got the five b'ars; an' they told me I should have a resting spell, to pay for the game I had shot. And I did have a resting spell; I wasn't able to go out for over a week. But I got over it after a while, else I would not have been here with you to-night."

Such was old John's bear story; and it being late, we rolled ourselves up in our blankets, and in ten minutes we were all asleep—all but the one to guard the horses.

THE PARIS CATACOMBS.

At the gates of entrance we were fallen upon by women selling candles, which they had arranged on sticks and cardboards so as to keep the grease from dripping. We fought them off—it is scarcely too strong an expression, so pressing, roughly persistent were they—and entered where a thick, double line of people was passing and had been passing for over an hour through a narrow door.

An official at the barrier examined the guide's permits, counted us, and on we went with tapers lit, a most curious procession of hundreds, descending a spiral stair until we were seventy-five feet below the city. Then on for fifteen minutes through an arched stone passage, and so on into the ossuary. A black line on the vault above was formerly the guiding mark from entrance to exit, but the side passages are now all chained across to prevent people from getting lost.

The bones are arranged symmetrically on either side of the damp, and in some places even muddy, path. Legs, arms, and skulls fashion crosses of various forms, while ribs and smaller bones are piled on top. Every now and again we arrive at a point where the path widens into a circle, and an official stands with a lantern.

In one of these a spring wells up. Stalactites in process of forming glisten on the vault. Weird shadows fall from the ghastly relics of the dead. The tramp, tramp of the footfalls and the murmur of voices echo and echo again.

We have read it all up for ourselves, but we listen while the guide explains that these excavations are ancient quarries extending under nearly all of Paris, that when, in 1784—the churchyards throughout the city having fallen into a bad condition—it became necessary, for sanitary reasons, to remove the dead, the quarries were prepared and duly consecrated, and the bodies of three millions of

human beings were removed into these receptacles by night, with solemn religious rites. Each cemetery was kept separate, and carefully marked.

We pause to examine various tablets fastened here and there with quotations from Scripture, verses from Latin and French poets, or moral sentiments in memory of the dead or for the consolation or warning of the living.

After an hour's walk, we leave the ossuary, pass through another stone vault and up a spiral stair, which brings us out on a street a mile and a half from where we started. An officer stands at the exit to count us as we emerge, in case of any one being lost, and a crowd of urchins scramble for the candle ends which people throw away.

THE POISONOUS AFRICAN FLY.

The latest news from South Africa is that a Natal man is so confident of having discovered a remedy against the tsetse fly that he has accepted a contract to transport the Portuguese military stores through the infected district on the backs of bullocks.

If he has, that man is worthy of a monument as big as Table Mountain, for he has removed the only great obstacle to the settlement and civilization of vast regions, where the one pest is not fever, or Kaffirs, or heat, but the bite of an insect not larger than the horse fly, and not unlike it.

Harmless to man, large game, and goats, it is death to horses, oxen, dogs, and in most cases to donkeys. A few days suffice to end the life of the bitten beast. An examination of the body exhibits the extraordinary changes which the speck of venom has wrought.

Among other transformations, the blood is thin, small in quantity, and so colorless that it will scarcely stain paper. No cure, no preventive of much value has yet been found. Lion's fat and milk and manure smeared over the threatened victims modify the attacks. But inoculation has no effect.

SIGNALING AT SEA.

The international code of signals was prepared and first published in April, 1857, in accordance with the views and recommendations of a committee appointed by the Board of Trade. The code consists of eighteen flags—namely, one burgee, four pennants, and thirteen square flags, and, in addition, an "answering pennant," which is displayed when the message is completed and understood.

The eighteen flags represent the consonants of the alphabet, and it is by a combination of two, three, or four of these flags, hung perpendicularly to each other, that arbitrary signs are made which represent words and sentences of the same signification in all languages. Each signal has throughout the code but one signification.

A signal is always made in "one hoist" in one place. The nature of the signals is indicated by the number of flags hoisted, whether two, three, or four together. Signals of two flags relate to danger or distress; signals of three flags to general subjects of inquiry or communication, including latitude, longitude, and time signals; and signals of four flags to names. Single flags are not used in code signals, with the exception of "Yes" and "No," and "Answering" pennants.

The flags to be hoisted at one time never exceed four. It is an interesting arithmetical fact that with eighteen variously colored flags, and never using more than four at a time, no fewer than 78,642 distinct signals can be given. Two flags, as we had already stated, indicate danger and urgency. Thus, on turning to the code, we have such examples as follows:

"N G—I am unmanageable. N C—In distress—want assistance. N F—Do not abandon me. P M—Want a warp run out."

While the foregoing system is in universal use, some steamers signal to each other by the Morse system of dots and dashes, which at night they can do by flashes.

THE TOBACCO TOWN.

There is something in the climate of the Philippine Isles which is especially favorable for the cultivation of tobacco.

In this important group of islands, Manila is the first town; probably on account of its magnificent natural harbor, which makes it the chief trading center.

The tobacco business forms, of course, the great industry of this quaint eastern city, and, indeed, of the entire Island of Luzon.

Some three years ago there was more than sixty thousand acres devoted to the growth of the plant. The combined crops from this area of tobacco fields represent yearly some thirty thousand tons of the leaf.

The most important branch of the trade is, naturally, the cigar making, which gives employment to three thousand men, and, at busy times, more than twenty-one thousand women. The work is very fatiguing and dreadfully monotonous, and as labor is cheap the wages are not magnificent.

Cigarettes, of which they make rather a specialty, are rolled and packed at the rate of four hundred millions in the course of twelve months. This leaves about two thousand five hundred tons of cut tobacco to be exported and rolled in other climes.

It owes nearly all its importance and progression to the Spaniards, who do their utmost to prevent any other foreigners from settling there.

They have especially a deep-rooted dislike to any emigrants putting in an appearance from the Chinese shores.

The town is very interesting to explore. You would be surprised to find many fine stone houses and old churches in a state of absolute ruin, and to discover wooden erections in their stead.

The natives give an explanation of this singular state of things.

It seems that in the year 1882 a terrible hurricane swept with extraordinary fury over the land. It devastated the land and threw half the town into ruins. Many fine structures of stone were completely destroyed. Wooden buildings were raised to take their places, but the skeletons of the edifices were left, and they give an air of picturesqueness to the town.

The quarter of the town inhabited by the natives, who are for the most part engaged in the tobacco trade, is built of bamboo huts, which are thatched with enormous palm leaves, which help to keep off the unrelenting rays of the fierce eastern sun.

The native builders use no glass in the windows. Instead, they place in the frames the shell of a huge oyster. This also helps in keeping the interior of the huts at a reasonable temperature.

THE NEWS OF ALL NATIONS.

Many Recruits Lack Only Nerve in Majors.

Jocko Halligan, veteran outfielder, who is now umpiring in the Canadian League, has decided opinions. He says that the one quality that makes big leaguers out of good minor performers is nerve. "Many youngsters who are chock-full of natural ability go up there and fall down just because they cannot get the fact impressed upon them that baseball is baseball no matter where it is played.

"They don't hit 'em harder, pitch 'em any faster, or run bases much better in the big leagues, but the youngsters think that the big league is a perfection point. Take some of the big leaguers of to-day and put them in minor-league clubs without any identification marks on them and the fans would have difficulty in telling the difference. I realize the science of the game as practiced in the major leagues and also do not underestimate the value of brainy players, but if many a youngster who has gone up and failed could have got that idea of the big leaguers being 100 per cent better than he out of his head there would not be so many scouts now on duty."

Aged Babes in the Woods.

The two oldest Indians on Siletz Reservation, Doctor Johnson, aged 104, and his common-law wife, Susannah Jack, aged 100, who were lost three days and nights in Siletz forest, Oregon, have just found their way back to the tribe. They were picking berries and lost their way on account of poor sight.

The Indians were in a critical condition on reaching their wigwam, as they had eaten nothing but berries and roots for three days.

Tells How to Keep Well.

Professor Vincenz Czerny, of Germany, one of the greatest of the Heidelberg surgeons and an authority on cancer, is leaving his post this fall, having attained the age of seventy. He has issued a kind of moral testament, seven injunctions to those who wish to go through life with healthy body and mind:

"1. Look after both body and mind in a rational way; divide the day reasonably between labor and recreation; eat healthy food; observe all rules of cleanliness, and live in a dry, sunny, well-aired house.

"2. Work eight hours at your calling, take eight hours for recreation, exercise, and self-improvement, and eight hours for sleep. One gets the best rest when asleep between two hours before and two hours after midnight. In the other eight hours you may count two for the three meals of the day, two for art or reading, two for family intercourse or for public works, and two hours for some exercise or sport, walking, climbing, riding, rowing, swimming, or gymnastics.

"3. Food must be both sustaining and easily digestible. You should not consume more than a pint of food and drink at each of the three meals; anything more than this overloads the stomach. In consequence observe moderation.

"4. You must not be a slave of enjoyment. Alcohol, coffee, tea, and tobacco have no nutritive qualities, but through the usages of generations they have become almost necessities, and are not easily replaced. They are all poisonous, but through customary use they have lost some of their dangers. By injudicious use of them you shorten your life.

"5. From childhood up see that you are clean. Have at least a sponge down with cold water every day; twice a day clean the teeth and wash both hands and face. Take a hot bath once a week, and see that you change your linen and bed linen regularly. Your rooms must be large, dry, and sunny, and the bedrooms especially must be large and well aired.

"6. Bring only as many children into the world as you can feed and educate; and,

"7. When ill do not delay to consult a really capable doctor and follow his advice."

Wireless Mast for Far North.

The Red Cross liner *Stephano*, which sailed recently from New York for Halifax and Newfoundland, carried away one of the finest sticks of Oregon pine that has been seen for many a year.

It came all the way around the Horn in a sailing ship, and is going to be used as a wireless mast by the Hudson Bay Company, in the Far North. It will be transferred to one of the company's steamships at Halifax. It is 75 feet long and 2 feet in diameter.

Navin Will Not Let Cobb Play on Coast.

President Navin, of the Detroit American League club, has sent word to Ed Maier, promoter of the Los Angeles team known as the Select Kids, that he will not allow Tyrus Cobb to play on the coast next winter. For the last two months Maier had been negotiating with the Georgian to play in Los Angeles every Sunday from November to the first of March, but Navin's message ends the dickering. Navin incidentally wrote that he is considering California for the Tigers' next training trip as the result of the big profits earned there by the White Sox.

Races Train With Hand Car; Saves Son.

Charles Hendrix, maintainer of an electric interlocking tower, raced against time and an Erie flyer in a perilous journey from Griffith, Ind., to Hobart on a hand car. By his disregard for personal safety, he saved the life of Jack, his little son. On an electric speeder he carried the sick child over the Erie main line at forty miles an hour, giving his own "high balls" and beating the limited into Hobart. The child, who was dangerously ill, was rushed to a doctor's office, and will recover.

Indict Man Who Spanked Father.

The grand jury, one of whose members was the Reverend C. H. Leoson, has indicted the Reverend E. A. Hanley, president of the Indiana Baptist College, at Franklin, Ind., and formerly pastor of the Rockefeller church, at Cleveland, for assault and battery.

Doctor Hanley admitted he "switched" his father, Calvin Hanley, 63 years old, and issued two statements explain-

ing that he did so because for thirty years his father was cruel to his mother. The grand jury heard the testimony of Doctor Hanley's brother, Oakley Hanley; Mrs. Calvin Hanley, and the wife of Oakley Hanley, the only eye-witnesses, and of Doctor Payne, who attended the father and found him badly injured.

Really Tried Hair of a Dog.

Apparently the day is gone when the "hair of the dog will cure the bite," and as a result of faith in this superstition Tony Cadoni, 11 years old, of 31 Willow Street, Astoria, is in St. John's Hospital, Long Island City, with blood poisoning.

He was bitten in the arm by a mongrel dog, and was taken to the hospital, where the wound was cleaned, cauterized, and bandaged. After the boy had gone home, friends persuaded the parents to remove the bandage and resort to the ancient remedy of applying some hair clipped from the dog. Blood poisoning resulted, and an operation will probably be necessary to save the boy's arm, perhaps his life.

To Fly to England.

Captain Matthew A. Batson, United States army, retired, prophecies that another year will see the initial voyage of his new multiplane "air yacht" from Savannah, Ga., to Liverpool.

So sure is the inventor of the success of his venture that he has incorporated a company for the manufacture and operation of his vessel for the purpose of carrying passengers, mail, and freight between domestic and interoceanic ports.

The models of his strange craft have flown successfully, and the first complete air yacht, theoretically capable of carrying ten passengers, two aëronauts, two days' fuel, and two tons of freight at a speed of 100 miles an hour, is almost ready for its initial trial.

The inventor will try it out first on water, along the reaches of the Wilmington River, then will come the test of air flights. If the vessel answers his expectations, a few weeks will see the first long flight from Savannah to New York, and the next step will be an attempt at the transatlantic voyage of which Captain Batson has dreamed ever since he started his aviation experiments in 1896.

He holds full patents and hopes to make his invention available especially for the United States government. Army officials will witness the tests. The captain, who holds a congressional medal of honor for bravery in action, has high standing in army circles because of his efficient work in organizing and helping to suppress the insular insurrection, the first Filipino scouts, and has an international reputation as a brilliant mechanical engineer.

The inventor claims three things for his craft which have not yet been attained except by Rudyard Kipling's imagination in his romance of the "Night Mail." They are speed, safety, and carrying power.

Some existing aëroplanes have great speed, without stability. The V-shaped biplane of J. E. Dunne seems to have stability, without speed. None have great carrying power or seem capable of developing it, because the materials of which the lifting planes are built seem incapable of the strain that larger size would involve.

Batson obtains his increased carrying power by using many planes, all attached to the chassis or rigid body of his machine, and so adjusted that the air passing under them is turning inward, passing beneath the vaulted body and helping to sustain it.

He obtains stability by a novel adjustment whereby the planes of either side are raised or lowered to take an "air bowlder" or gust without tipping the opposite planes.

The angle of all the planes, too, may be changed at will by the operator, while in other aëroplanes the plane angle is fixed. If the machines stop dead, the planes are set automatically at a gliding angle, and the craft sails safely to the ground or water.

Steadiness of propulsion is obtained by three 125-horse-power engines, two of which are used at once, while one is always held in reserve. There are four eleven-foot propellers.

The inventor estimates that the Savannah-Liverpool trip can be made under ordinary conditions in thirty-six hours.

Texas Israelites Go North.

Converts to the faith of the so-called Israelites are preparing to start from the community of Overton, Texas, to Benton Harbor, Mich. They go about the last of the month, in order to be there among the elect, at the end of the world, which they have set for 1914. The converts, who believe they will live forever when all other folk are destroyed, talk of little else. The men have quit shaving, and neither the men nor the women are supposed to take interest in worldly things.

Aerial Racing Losing Favor.

The refusal of several aëroplane manufacturers to enter their machines for the international cup competition, at Rheims, France, indicates that aërial racing is going the way of automobile racing.

Designers aver that the over-engined and lightly constructed air machines built for speed do not actually advance aviation more than machines built for automobile racing alone are fit for everyday practical use. Aviation appears to-day to be entering upon a period in which study and experiment will be carried out in the direction of heavier, slower, and safe machines. The effort will be to drive a heavier apparatus at a speed less dangerous than a mile a minute or more, the velocity attained by most lightweight aëroplanes of this season.

Says Lepers Die from Grief.

Jack Grace, former lightweight boxer, is in San Francisco again after spending three months in the Hawaiian Islands. Grace has been knocking about the world for years, and he has traded yarns in every port of the seven seas.

This time he has an interesting story about a visit to the famous leper colony at Molokai, on an isolated island of the Hawaiian group, where 700 outcasts live as contentedly as may be under the care of the Hawaiian government, and where Father Damien lived and died.

Two things particularly impressed Jack at Molokai. One was the tough luck of the six lepers of European or Australian parentage. They are doomed to spend the rest of their lives in the colony of Chinese, Japanese, and Hawaiians, and their own society is their only comfort, aside from the moving pictures that are shown in the colony's largest building every evening.

"I met an Australian that looked as healthy as I am," said Grace. "The disease was just in his toe, but a shyster

doctor had shanghaied him to the island, and he had to stay there for life. He was just grieving away, and had lost forty pounds. All the Europeans die of just grieving."

The other things that interested Grace was a hospital a mile from the colony, where about a dozen healthy babies were shown to him. Their parents were lepers, who had been allowed to marry each other under the rules of the colony.

"As soon as a baby is born they take it away and put it in the hospital," said Grace. "The mother can look at it sometimes through a heavy pane of glasss, but she must never touch it. Then in three months the baby is sent to Honolulu, where the Catholic Church has an orphanage. The parents never see it again.

"Not a single baby born to lepers on the island has ever showed a trace of the disease. That is because they are so careful to keep them from the parents from the moment they are born."

Nickalls to Coach Pennsylvania.

Vivian Nickalls, the famous English oarsman, recently signed as coach of the University of Pennsylvania crews, has arrived in Philadelphia. He visited the college boat club on the Schuylkill River, where the Red and Blue crews are launched.

The new coach said recently: "There is no reason whatever why the Red and Blue should not be successful in rowing. There are hundreds of powerful young men here who have every physical requisite to make good oarsmen. Among them I am sure to find enough candidates with experience to form a nucleus around which to build winning combinations. The Penn crews will row the same stroke that was so powerful at Detroit."

Doctor Sam Gordon, the Vesper Boat Club sculler, expects to enter the University of Pennsylvania this fall for some postgraduate work, and will make an ideal stroke.

Flies 558 Miles Across the Sea.

The aviator, Roland G. Garros, recently crossed the Mediterranean from Frejus, near Cannes, to Bizerta, near Tunis, adding another record to the list of French aërial achievements.

Garros had contemplated the flight for some time, despite the efforts of his friends to persuade him to abandon the idea. He disdained the offer of the French admiralty to assist him with a chain of torpedo boats, and, without saying anything to any one but a few friends, arranged to make the attempt.

At six o'clock in the morning, in a Morane-Saulnier monoplane fitted with a Gnome engine, he flew south on his 558-mile journey over the sea. The weather was fine.

For some time after Garros had disappeared his friends were without news. Then, between seven and eight o'clock, a wireless message from Ajaccio, Corsica, announced that the monoplane had passed there, heading for Tunis. Ajaccio is about 112 miles from the French coast.

Shortly afterward Garros was reported over the coast of Sardinia, and at one-forty-five p. m. a message from Bizerta announced that he had landed there, having made a no-stop flight.

Garros' flight ranks as one of the most notable feats in aviation. He did not actually fly 558 miles without passing land, but two stages, one of 112 miles and the other of 125 miles, were over the sea, without the possibility of rescue had he fallen. His actual flying time was 7 hours 45 minutes.

There were scenes of wild enthusiasm in Bizerta when Garros landed. The crews of the warships in the roads joined the townspeople in giving him a magnificent ovation.

Rain Causes Murder.

An illustration of the incredible superstition of the Russian peasant is recorded in a telegram from St. Petersburg to the Berlin *Tageblatt*.

In the village of Walizo, near Lodz, the peasants recently held a meeting to discover the cause of the heavy rain, which rendered the harvest prospects most unfavorable, and decided it was an infliction from Heaven on account of the intemperate habits of the local innkeeper, a man named Zeichon.

A deputation remonstrated with the innkeeper, but he refused to mend his ways, and as the rain did not stop the peasants held a court in a field, before which Zeichon was brought and sentenced to death.

The peasants carried out the sentence on the spot by beating Zeichon to death.

Peat Power for Fuel.

The announcement that Hjalmar von Porat, a Swedish engineer, had perfected a process for utilizing peat powder as fuel for locomotives has awakened interest in the possibility of developing the extensive peat bogs of Sweden for this purpose, says the editor of *Power*.

The powder is manufactured by the Ekelund process. It does not appear that this process has made much headway as yet, but it is now predicted that in connection with the discovery of Mr. von Porat the use of peat powder will in time become extensive.

In the Von Porat system the peat powder is fed by an automatic device into the furnace of the locomotive, which is specially arranged to consume it. According to Mr. von Porat, the results obtained with peat powder may be summed up as follows:

Substantially the same results can be had from 1½ tons of peat powder that one ton of coal will produce. Peat powder may be burned with an admixture of about 5 per cent of coal. As to firing with peat powder, the work is almost nothing in comparison with firing with coal, because the powder is forced into the furnace by automatic process. No change had to be made in the boiler and none in the firebox except installing the special apparatus. There is no difficulty in bringing the powder from the tender to the firebox, as it passes through a conveyance pipe. Another advantage in using peat powder is that no cold air can get into the firebox and neither smoke nor sparks escape from the smokestack.

As a result of Von Porat's invention, it is reported that a number of Swedish railways are preparing to use peat powder instead of coal.

Maniac Fasts for Forty Days.

John Robertson, a patient at the State Hospital for the Insane, at Kankakee, Ill., unconscious and nearly starved, was found recently in an abandoned room in the basement of the institution, where he had been hiding for forty days and forty nights.

Robertson was crouched at the foot of a rusty water pipe from which a drop of water fell every few minutes.

This water, it is believed, is the only sustenance he has had since he disappeared from one of the fields in which he was working. The man was found by a party of plumbers who entered the basement to repair the water pipes.

Robertson was taken to a hospital and fed by artificial means. Michael Kelly, superintendent, declared that physicians believed there was some chance of his recovery. He was admitted to the hospital for insane from Ohio in 1898 and was regarded as a harmless patient and allowed to do outside work. When he disappeared from the field his absence was not noticed until the roll call at night.

A search of the buildings of the institution was made, and when Robertson was not found the police of Chicago and Kankakee were notified. When several days' search brought no trace of the missing man, the attendants believed he had wandered to some remote part of the State.

The room in which Robertson was found has been deserted for years and the door kept locked. Superintendent Kelly has not yet learned how the patient gained admission.

Siam's Earth Eaters.

The Loas, of Siam, eat earth, and enjoy it, just as the German drinks beer, the Frenchman wine, and the Englishman his ale. No one knows exactly where they contracted the habit. Perhaps during some time of great famine when there was nothing else to devour. At any rate, the habit is strong, and rich and poor alike indulge.

They prefer it when it is procured near waters, so that it has the taste of fish. It is prepared into a pasty substance and smothered in the ground in a hot fire. It is sold in the markets and stores, and is served at dinners and big functions of all kinds. Children, women, and men eat it together.

Of course, it is dreadfully hard on the digestion, and in time produces intense pain, and death follows. But, like the opium eater, the dirt eater will beg for his food even at death's door.

In some parts of the Kongo the dirt is sold in the shape of apples and oranges, and all kinds are given out—yellow dirt, brown dirt, gray earth, and pinkish varieties, too, which is considered a great luxury, indeed.

Ball Players in the "Movies."

Tyrus Cobb, Larry Lajoie, Joe Jackson, Eddie Collins, Tris Speaker, Jean Dubuc, and some of the other stars of the American League will have their feats of the diamond displayed on the motion-picture screen during the coming winter, provided plans that are now being formulated by two or three of the big motion-picture companies go through. It is proposed to take the stars South shortly after the close of the world's series, and have them perform in plays drafted and built up around baseball incidents of a major-league season. The diamond has been one of the big fields that have not been thoroughly covered by motion pictures, and it is the belief of the originators of the plan that such a series of plays would preserve the identity of the present-day stars and would serve as a future basis for the comparison of players. Not alone that, but the screens would furnish amusement for the jaded spirits of baseball fans during the winter months. It is not thought that the picture firms will encounter any opposition from the owners of major-league teams. President Frank J. Navin, of the Detroit club, will not put any obstacles in the path of the originators of the scheme. Mr. Navin declares that he has no objections to having his players perform before the camera, and the question now is one that is revolving around the probable demands of the men for their services.

Facts You May Not Know.

The aviation corps of the United States army has had more deaths than that of any other country except Italy.

Rice forms the principal article of food of about one-third of the human race.

Kilkenny Castle, Ireland, has rooms unchanged in 800 years.

Garters with several flap pockets that fasten with snap buttons have been invented to aid women in carrying jewelry or money.

Of 74,000 railroad locomotives inspected last year by the Interstate Commerce Commission more than 48,000 were found defective.

In the wine region of Spain the method of treading the grapes is everywhere about the same. The grapes are well spread out in the press, and barefooted men or men wearing sandals or wooden-soled shoes tread them.

The Chinese bought 1,000,000 Bibles during the first six months of this year.

All German submarine boats have been equipped with buoys that can be detached from the deck of a sunken craft at the end of a cable containing a telephone wire to enable rescuers to converse with persons within the boat.

Exports to the United States from Japan in 1912 amounted to $84,000,000, constituting practically one-third of all that Japan exports. America annually consumes Japan tea worth about $10,000,000.

Hate 125 Years Old Shown in Will.

Enmity handed down from generation to generation for more than 125 years found final expression in the will of Miss Julia Garrett, last member of the Garrett family, who died in Villanova, Pa. Leaving $9,000,000 of an estate valued at $10,000,000 to Isaac T. Starr, her financial adviser and executor, she cut off from participation members of the Dunn family, cousins, because the Dunns' forbears looked with contempt upon John Garrett, from whom she was descended, when he started in a humble way the manufacture of snuff 131 years ago.

When his business, begun on a capital of $100 in New Castle County, Delaware, expanded and he became wealthy, Garrett remembered the attitude of the Dunns. Succeeding generations kept the enmity alive.

Cow Killed After She Wags Tail and "Barks."

Emmeline had to be killed. Although a cow, she wagged her tail and barked, which was a sign of rabies, and led to her death sentence and execution in Quincy, Mass.

Emmeline belonged to Morris Gordon, of that town, and she was bitten by a St. Bernard dog, which, six weeks ago, terrorized the place. Gordon didn't mind it when Emmeline growled, but when she started to bite and bark, it was too much, and he called in a policeman. Emmeline was shot.

This Farm Attracts Meteors.

Richard Trout, who owns a sixteen-acre farm near Lindwood, Kansas, in the northwest corner of Johnson County, is wondering what sort of magnet or loadstone

is concealed on his place that is attracting meteors to his very door. Mr. Trout's house is about 100 feet from the bank of the Kaw River. One night recently he set a few lines in the river for fish, and then sat for an hour on his front porch facing the river enjoying the cool night air. Mr. Trout is 74 years old.

Mr. Trout describes the meteor as having the appearance of an enormous skyrocket plunging toward the earth, leaving a trail of sparks behind it. During its course it emitted an intense greenish light that reached a blinding climax at the moment the meteor struck the earth and exploded. The course of the meteor was from northeast to the southwest, and was visible only a few seconds.

Mr. Trout saw the meteor strike the earth on the bank three feet from the water's edge. A hissing noise was heard as of hot substances being thrown into water, and volumes of steam dissolved in the air. Mr. Trout ran down to the river bank and found a hole four feet deep in the mud, exhausting steam and gases.

The next morning he dug around the hole and found the meteor had been dashed to pieces when it came in contact with a limestone formation four feet underground. Fragments of the meteor had been thrown out of the hole and scattered along the bank. As a whole, the meteor would probably be as large as a coconut. It was streaked with colors, and parts could be easily crumbled in the hands, while other parts were broken with difficulty with a hammer. Crystal particles are scattered through the stone. It appears to be of sedimentary origin rather than a burned ball of metal.

Some weeks ago Mr. Trout was on the river in a boat, fishing, when a brilliant streak of fire struck the water about a quarter of a mile from him. It threw water thirty feet, according to Mr. Trout, and its contact with the water caused volumes of steam to ascend.

Knife Gives Reason to Insane Convict.

Saved from seemingly certain death and his mentality restored, Janos Szikely, who recently was one of the most vicious convicts in the New Jersey State prison, at Trenton, N. J., is to-day one of the institution's most ideal inmates. He has been completely transformed by the removal of a piece of bone that had been pressing upon his brain.

The man was received from Belvidere October 11, 1911, to serve thirty years for murder. He showed signs of being irrational, and an examination showed he was suffering from a fractured skull.

When the surgeons deemed the operation imperative to save his life, they removed a section of bone one and a half inches in diameter. An hour after the operation Szikely recovered from the effects of the anæsthetic, and, using good English, asked for a glass of milk. Prior to the operation he had spoken only in Hungarian.

Fortune Teller Warned Gaynor.

Heart failure due to a wound inflicted by a would-be-assassin three years ago caused the death of Mayor Gaynor, of New York, which occurred while he was seated in a deck chair on the steamer *Baltic*, bound for Europe. The mayor took the voyage for a rest, and had intended to return immediately to enter a campaign for reëlection.

Before he was shot by James J. Gallagher, a discharged employee of the city dock department, Mayor Gaynor went to a fortune teller, who warned him to beware of the water. He was shot just as he was boarding a steamer for Europe, and his death at sea further justifies the prophecy.

Potato Wears Wedding Ring.

Edgar Beck, of Worcester, Mass., went out into his back yard to dig potatoes and found gold. The gold was in the shape of a wedding ring, which surrounded the middle of a huge potato. The tuber was of unusual size, and looked more like two large potatoes, being joined together by a narrow neck, the neck being encircled by the gold ring.

Not Afraid of New Gem.

Although Berlin dispatches state that the Emperor William has been much attracted by a new gem called heliodore, discovered in German East Africa, English dealers do not believe that it is likely to rival the better-known varieties of precious stones.

The Kaiser has had seven heliodore stones set with diamonds and pearls, and made into a cross for the empress. The chief characteristic of heliodore is that it changes color, being a golden yellow in daylight and green by artificial light.

New-design Torpedoes on Japanese Cruiser.

The new Japanese battle cruiser *Kongo*, which has just sailed from Plymouth, England, for home, is taking with her forty torpedoes of a new and secret design. These torpedoes, a 21-inch weapon officially known as the V. L., are as great an improvement upon the British admiralty's Hardcastle weapon as that torpedo was upon its cold-air predecessors. Both are propelled by heated air, but while the Hardcastle had a range of 8,000 yards, the V. L. can travel from 10,000 to 12,000 yards at a speed of 48 knots.

The trials of the Japanese order were made under the personal supervision of two officers of the *Kongo*, and the tests were carried on with the greatest secrecy. They are said to have been highly satisfactory.

In a few weeks the company manufacturing this new weapon will begin work on a large order for delivery to the United States navy.

Cowboys in Tie for Broncho-busting Title.

On "Long Tom," the worst bucking demon ever seen at Pendleton, Ore., A. E. McCormach, of Cheyenne, Wyo., fought his way to the broncho-busting championship of the world in the finals at the Pendleton round-up before 35,000 persons.

Bob Cavin, of Caldwell, Idaho, tied for championship honors, and the luck of the draw gave McCormach the championship.

Bertha Blanchett, of Los Angeles, became woman champion relay cowgirl rider by winning each heat in the three dashes. Mrs. Blanchett, on Rambling Sam, barely was defeated for the championship of the world in the cowgirl's bucking contest by Nettie Hawn, of Fresno, Cal., on Snake.

Ed McCarty, of Cheyenne, took the street-roping championship in twenty-seven minutes.

Sparrows Kill Pests.

Investigations into the pests and diseases which affect alfalfa are of interest to Eastern farmers, who are just learning the merits of the crop. Most of these investiga-

tions are being made in the West, and the latest bulletin on the subject comes from the agricultural department of the University of Wisconsin.

"The English sparrow has found a claim to usefulness," the bulletin says. "The most despised of birds promises to be of service in checking the spread of the alfalfa weevil. The spread of this pest has threatened the destruction of the alfalfa industry in Utah, Wyoming, and southern Idaho, and caused much alarm among growers of the plant in Wisconsin and other middle Western States, who have feared the introduction of the pest upon seed brought into their respective communities.

"That the seed-introduction theory of spread is false has been definitely proved by T. H. Parks and James G. Sanders, plant experts, respectively, to the Idaho Agricultural College and the University of Wisconsin's College of Agriculture. Their investigations have shown that the weevil feeds upon leaves and stems of the plant, but never upon the seed. On the other hand, there is every possibility of spread in the fact that the beetle or its eggs may be carried from district to district in the hay upon which it feeds.

"The alfalfa weevil is a pest of foreign birth. It was first discovered in the fields of southern Europe, northern Africa, and western Asia. Later it appeared in certain sections of the United States west of the Rockies. The pest passes the winter in the crowns of alfalfa plants, patches of grass, weeds, and litter, along fences, roads, and ditch banks. This has caused Western farmers to adopt cultivation and brush dragging of their fields after removal of the first crop, and it is the most effective remedy known. Further control they seek by clean culture and shorter rotation of crops.

"Much groundless prejudice to seed from States quarantined for alfalfa weevil has developed in Wisconsin and other States of the Middle West. The recent discoveries of Professors Parks and Sanders should eliminate much of this antipathy. And now that Wisconsin farmers grow larger crops of alfalfa for their own use, the necessity of importing forage is not so keen, and the probability of weevil introduction is diminished."

Crusade Against Boxing.

Official approval was given to the crusade for the prohibition of boxing in California recently when the county supervisors adopted resolutions declaring this the only means to prevent prize-ring fatalities such as the death of John ("Bull") Young after his fight with Jess Willard. The sport as now conducted by professional athletic clubs was condemned.

Announcement has been made that the initiative law would be invoked at once to bring the matter before the voters of the State. The proposed measure has not been drafted as yet.

Girl Risks Life for Sake of Snake Belt.

Her anxiety to have a rattlesnake-skin belt almost cost the life of Miss Grace Glasspool, of Nunn, Colo., when a snake she supposed was dead suddenly showed itself very much alive and struck at her.

Miss Glasspool was out riding with a friend when they came across the rattler sunning itself in the highway. The girl attacked the snake with the whip, apparently killing it. She placed it in the buggy and drove to town.

When she pulled the snake from its place it fell to the ground, coiling and striking at her. Her heavy riding skirt caught the fangs, saving her. Bystanders killed the snake with a hatchet, and Miss Glasspool still has hopes of eventually owning the belt.

Finds a Trout in His Potato Patch.

Guy Needham, of Carbondale, Colo., has the prize fish story of the season. While digging potatoes he discovered a trout thirty-three inches long and eight inches across. It weighed eight pounds. The fish probably came down in an irrigation ditch from the Frying Pan River. Anyway, it landed in the Needham frying pan, and the whole family says it was "some fish."

Horse Dies as it Wins Race.

Go-between, the famous racing stallion which won the largest purse ever pulled down by one horse, in the Suburban Handicap in 1906, when it captured $187,000 for its owner, fell over dead under the wire while in the lead of a fast string of horses in the one-mile running race at the Berks fair, Reading, Pa. Jenks, a noted negro jockey, Go-between's mount, fell with the horse, but was not injured. The horse's neck was broken, and it appeared as if he had stumbled.

Sporting News of Interest.

Doc Ayres, a young pitcher, who is the property of the Washington Senators, set a good record in the Virginia League this season. He won twenty-eight games and lost but eight, having fanned 353 men.

First Baseman Duggan, in a game between the Decatur and Quincy, Ill., teams, had but one put-out in the nine innings of play.

Terry Turner, of the Cleveland Naps, is believed by many authorities to be the best fielding third baseman in the business.

Eddie Collins, second baseman of the Philadelphhia Athletics, has scored 108 runs in 125 games.

Arthur Pelkey, the heavyweight pugilist, whose blow caused the death of Luther McCarthy in their bout at Calgary, Canada, several months ago, has retracted the charges he made recently against his manager, Tommy Burns, who lost the heavyweight championship to Jack Johnson. Pelkey now says he was drunk when he stated that he and Burns went into a "fixed" fight at Calgary last March. The charges did not make much difference, anyway, as Burns is a "has been" and Pelkey seems to be a "never was."

Ogden and Helena, Union Association ball teams, made a hitting record. In a double-header the runs scored were 52, hits 72, total bases 125, errors 15.

"Any ball player who tips his hat to the crowd's applause is a fool," says a well-known manager. "They may hiss him on the next play."

Ad Wolgast, former lightweight champion, has announced his retirement from the ring. It is not his first farewell, but Ad declares he really means it. He has bought a ranch at Medford, Ore., and will move there from his home at Cadillac, Mich.

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